

The Story that won \$2100.



October

1904

The Black Cat

A Few Bars in the Key of G.
\$2100.00 Prize.

Clifton Carlisle Osborne.

Unlucky Paul.
Marjorie R. Johnson.

A Labor Problem Solved.
W. B. Compton.

Where the Lines Meet.
\$100.00 Prize.
Frank X. Finnegan.

Dave Whittam's Confession.
Mary B. Mullett.

Vol. X., No. 1. Whole No. 100. Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Co.

Price 5 cents.

THE SHORTSTORY PUBLISHING CO., 144 HIGH ST., BOSTON, MASS.

and 110 Norfolk Street, Strand, London, W. C.

PENN STATE

Stories from The Black Cat, Collection 4

The Man Who Sold His Head by Elliott Flower - May 1904

The Skyscraper in B Flat by Frank Lillie Pollock - June 1904

How Jack London "Arrived" (Boston Globe, June 8, 1904)

- July 1904

The Psychologist's Masterpiece by J. Rowe Webster - July 1904

The Pale Miss Knight by Elizabeth West - August 1904

The Hypnotic Signs by Edgar Dayton Price - November 1904

A Rule That Worked Both Ways by Octavia Zollicoffer Bond

- December 1904

The Black Cat Prize Story Contest (ad) - January 1904

The Under-Water Man by Philip Loring Allen - February 1905

Doctor Million by Don Mark Lemon - February 1905

The Man Who Did Things Twice by Don Mark Lemon -

June 1905

In the Hands of His Friends by Don Mark Lemon - July 1905

The New Minister by Don Mark Lemon - August 1905

Eggs \$12,000 per Dozen by Don Mark Lemon - September 1905

The Farm That Forgot by Don Mark Lemon - October 1905

A Hint from Santa Claus (ad) - November 1905

In Re State vs. Forbes by Warren Earle - July 1906

The Great Power by Henry Oyen - July 1906

The Essence of Advertising by Don Mark Lemon - August 1906

A Man and a Mermaid by W. George Gribbble - February 1907

This Jolly Pair for Your Own (ad) - February 1907

The House That Jill Built by Don Mark Lemon - March 1907

The Mansion of Forgetfulness by Don Mark Lemon -

April 1907

Itself by Edgar Mayhew Bacon - May 1907

The Lace Designers by Don Mark Lemon - May 1907

The Death of Kalu's Hand by Cyril Etheridge - August 1907

Dalton's Inspiration by Stella B. McDonald - August 1907

Number One by Warren Earle - October 1907

The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vol. IX., No. 8.
Whole No. 104.

MAY, 1904.

5 cents a copy.
50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories—every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION.—*The entire contents of THE BLACK CAT are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

The Man Who Sold His Head.*

BY ELLIOTT FLOWER.



REMARKABLE head!" commented Dr. Linscott. "I wish I had it."

"If it's worth anything to you," returned Eugene Freer, gloomily, "you ought to have it, for it's worth nothing to me."

Freer was discouraged. He was not a particularly smart man, and he had lacked regular employment for some time. When a man who is past middle age and who has been a clerk all his life loses his place there does not seem to be much hope for him. Employers want young men for positions that do not require the expert knowledge that comes with experience. So Freer was having a hard time making a living, and he could not see that his head was of any value.

Dr. Linscott had a different opinion, however. Freer had come to him for a prescription for some slight ailment, and in entering had jarred an Indian war-club from its place above the door. The fact that the club landed on his head did not disturb him in the least, so the Doctor's interest was aroused. He discovered that the head was of unusual shape and apparently of unusual construction. The skull seemed to be about two inches thick, and

* Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

there were other peculiarities that would be appreciated only by a physician who was making a study of abnormal cranial development.

"Oh, it may be worth something to you," said the Doctor, in reply to Freer's complaint. "How much will you take for it?"

Freer was startled.

"What good would money do me when my head's gone?" he asked.

"But I would expect to make payment in advance," explained the Doctor.

"You'd have to," asserted Freer. "A C. O. D. transaction wouldn't do at all."

"I can readily appreciate that," said the Doctor.

"If I waited to deliver the head before taking the money it would be very awkward," persisted Freer. "And then there is the question of spending the money. A fellow wants to have his head about him when he goes into any financial transactions. Otherwise, he will be cheated, sure."

"Oh, I would expect to leave the head in your keeping," returned the Doctor.

"For how long?" asked Freer, doubtfully.

"As long as you had any use for it."

"I wouldn't like to make one of these call-loan deals of it," explained Freer. "The uncertainty as to when it might be 'called' would be really distressing."

"Don't worry about that," urged the Doctor. "I admit that your head on your shoulders doesn't amount to much, in which it is very much like many other heads in this world; but your head in my hands would be of considerable value to medical science. I would like to examine it at my leisure, inside and out; I would like to see exactly what force is required to crack the skull; I would like to investigate the cause of its peculiar shape — indeed, there are a number of experiments I would like to make with and on that head of yours, and then, too, I think it would make a valuable addition to my collection of curious and abnormal skulls. But I have no desire to be unreasonable. I can quite understand your disinclination to have your skull put on a shelf as long as you have any personal use for it, so all I ask is that it shall come to me when you are dead."

"May I take my own time about dying?"

"So far as I am concerned, you may."

"That's very liberal of you."

"I think it is myself. Some people — in fact, most people — would not be willing to give their property into the keeping of another for an indefinite period, but I always was a generous and considerate man. If you sell me your head, you may have the use of it as long as you live, and I won't even charge you rent for it."

"Suppose you should die first?"

"In that case, I will bequeath it to a professional friend in whom I have the utmost confidence."

"I don't think I would like to have my head figuring in a will contest in the probate court," said Freer. "The judge might insist upon appointing another custodian for it, or he might insist that it be deposited with the clerk of the court. You never can tell what a judge will do."

"We will see that the provisions of the bill of sale guard against that."

"How much is the head worth to you?"

"Five hundred dollars."

"Cash?"

"No; I can't afford to pay that much down, but I'll give you five dollars a week in addition to giving you all necessary medical attention free of charge, and I'll pay you for a full month in advance now."

"Pass over the twenty," said Freer, reaching a sudden decision, "and I'll sign the bill of sale whenever it's ready. Twenty dollars looks mighty big to me just now, and a fellow with five dollars a week can't starve, anyhow."

The fact that he had money in his pocket made Freer reasonably contented when he left the Doctor's office, but later he began to worry a little. It seemed to him that a fellow who had no head of his own was indeed an unfortunate and poverty-stricken wretch, and certainly no self-respecting man would consent to be indebted to another for so important a part of his personal structure. It completely wrecked his independence. He could do nothing by himself, but had to rely on the generosity of a comparative

stranger for practically everything. It was the Doctor's property that enabled him to read. If he studied, he was improving the Doctor's mental equipment. The work that he did was a sort of combination — he used his own hands, but they were directed by the Doctor's brains, and he learned of the progress made through the Doctor's eyes. Sometimes he wondered if the Doctor were not entitled to part of the money he made out of the occasional employment that he secured, but the Doctor's assurance that he would not charge him rent for the head seemed to dispose of this question. Still, it was humiliating to have to make such personal use of another's property.

"Anyway," he argued to himself, "it was a good bargain, for I also get medical attention free. Now, if I'm sick —" He stopped with a sudden gasp. "Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "wouldn't I be a fool to let the owner of this head pour any drugs into me? If he happened to get impatient for it, what kind of a chance would I stand?"

With this idea in mind he took the first opportunity to inform the Doctor that he would not call upon him for any professional services.

"Haven't you confidence in my professional skill?" asked the Doctor.

"I have too much confidence in it," answered Freer. "I have so much confidence in it that I don't like to put temptation in your way. You might want the head, and I wouldn't like to make it too easy for you to get it."

"But it's my head," urged the Doctor, "and I have a right to see that it receives proper care and attention. If you have any lung or heart trouble, it may be all right to go to another physician, but if anything goes wrong with my head, you ought to bring it to me."

"You can inspect it from time to time to see that it's in good condition and receiving proper care," suggested Freer, "but really I'm a good deal interested in looking out for that head myself."

"True," admitted the Doctor, "but your interest is divided — the head is not your sole care, as it is mine — and I certainly must caution you to be careful. If you want to break an arm or a leg or a rib, why it's your business, but don't let a brick or any-

thing fall on the head. As the custodian of my property, you must be unusually cautious. If it got smashed it would be valueless to me."

"And to me," remarked Freer.

"Of course, of course," the Doctor conceded. "I guess, on the whole, I can afford to content myself with an occasional examination."

For some time after this all ran so smoothly that Freer became reconciled to his bargain. He was now fortunate enough to have a little work to do, and he went once a week to the Doctor's office to get his five dollars. This was paid without question or comment at first, but later the Doctor became irritable and unreasonable. Very likely this was due to the fact that his investment in the head was becoming considerable, and consequently the risk worried him. The day that Freer appeared with a 'black eye he was positively angry.

"You've been abusing my head," he exclaimed, "and I won't stand it. You've no right to put it in jeopardy by fighting. Think of how my interests would have been harmed if the other fellow had taken a meat-cleaver to it."

"And my interests, too," suggested Freer.

On another occasion the Doctor called across the street to Freer: "Hi, there! bring my head over here!" which made people turn and look at Freer, to his great discomfort. And, to make matters worse, the Doctor at once began to upbraid him for passing under a scaffolding that held a number of carpenters. "Suppose one of them had dropped a hammer on my head!" exclaimed the Doctor. "I tell you you're not treating me right in this matter. It's outrageous that you should expose my head to such danger."

A crowd naturally gathered.

"I wish to thunder you had your old head!" retorted Freer, angrily.

"Well, why don't you give it to me?" demanded the Doctor. "It's because you're too mean; you're going to live to the end of the hundred payments just to be ugly. Science is nothing to you; the fact that the world waits anxiously for the knowledge that I will glean from that head makes no impression on you at all. You

lack consideration — all you can think of is money. But you've got to be careful, or I'll go into court and have you fined for making improper use of my property."

As time passed the Doctor showed many signs of increasing impatience. Whenever and wherever he met Freer he peremptorily ordered him to submit his head for examination — to the great amazement of strangers; and Freer often found other physicians with the Doctor when he called to get his payments. On these occasions the Doctor demonstrated his proprietary interest in the head in a way that was annoying.

"What do you think of my purchase?" he asked one day. "Bring it over here, Freer." And Freer had to submit to an examination and listen to a learned discussion, after which the Doctor produced a heavy plate and broke it over Freer's head.

"You've no right to do that!" cried Freer.

"Oh, that's all right," returned the Doctor. "It was a risk, of course, but I was willing to take it in order to demonstrate a point to these skeptics." Then he took them all to an inner room where a row of skulls stood on a shelf. "There are some very curious specimens there," he explained, "but," and he placed his hand on the head that Freer was using, "I believe this to be more remarkable than any of them, and you will note that I have reserved a place of honor for it." He pointed to a vacant space near the middle of the shelf. "When this man," he went on, indicating Freer, "is considerate enough to deliver the goods I shall be glad to have your assistance in the ensuing investigation. It will, I think, prove a delightful and instructive task."

Freer left, with a picture impressed on his mind that was disturbing; he could see his own skull in the centre of that row, and he could also see those cold-blooded doctors deep in the study of it. That isn't a pleasant sort of a vision for a man to have with him always. Added to the annoyance and humiliation of having no head of his own in life, it made his position almost unbearable, and, after some thought, he went to a police station.

"I don't see what we can do," said the Captain, when the matter was explained to him. "A man's head is always worth what he can get for it, and, if he wants to sell it, it's his own business. If some one else sold your head, it would be different.

I don't think we could permit a brokerage business in living heads, as a matter of public policy, but — ”

“That's it,” broke in Freer. “Public policy! Such a bargain as this must be against public policy, and consequently void.”

“Perhaps,” conceded the Captain, “but you'd have to get a ruling of court on that. So far as I'm concerned, we can only get at the question through the gambling laws, and I doubt very much if that would be satisfactory. As I understand it, if you die before all the payments are made, the Doctor wins that much.”

“He gets the head without paying the full price,” said Freer, “and that's what makes him so ugly. He thinks I ought to die.”

“In that case,” asserted the Captain, “it's a gamble, a game of chance.”

“Can you raid it?” asked Freer, anxiously.

“We can raid anything, but the trouble is that we're compelled to seize all that pertains to the game in progress, and in this instance that would include the head.”

“Great Scott!” exclaimed Freer, “I don't want any more people to have claims to that head.”

“And, anyway,” continued the Captain, “we might not be able to make a case. It's quite possible that this might be considered speculation rather than gambling. I guess the only thing for you to do is to buy back your head.”

But what chance had Freer to buy back the head? The Doctor would probably demand a premium, and where could he get the necessary money? Apparently the only thing of value he had was the head, and he could not hypothecate that while the title rested in another, even if any one else would be willing to accept it as security.

“And, besides,” argued Freer, “that wouldn't help matters any. If I can't have title to the head myself, I might as well leave it with the Doctor. Another owner might be even more disagreeable than he is. No; there's no hope for me. I'll never have a head of my own again, and there's mighty little satisfaction or pleasure in using another man's. If I happened to be married now, I wonder what my wife would say to a headless husband. It's a most extraordinary predicament—and so complicated. Why, if I didn't have to carry this other fellow's head about with me, I

could go on exhibition at a dime museum as the headless man and easily get enough money to buy back what is necessary to make a complete man of myself."

Thus a year passed, during which Freer frequently speculated on the joy of being a whole person, for the doctor became more and more dictatorial. He even prepared a set of rules for Freer's guidance, and his references to prospective experiments with his purchased skull were of a nature to produce a most disquieting effect. He also made sarcastic comments on the mercenary spirit that induced Freer to hang on for the full purchase price. Then, too, when discussing the subject with others in Freer's presence, he gloated over his acquisition, and he pointed out the exact spot where he planned to pierce the skull at some later date.

But relief came at last, in the form of a legacy to Freer. It wasn't a large one, being only \$10,000 out of a large estate left by a distant relative, but it was a fortune to Freer after his long and hard struggle.

"What are you going to do with it?" asked the lawyer who acquainted him with his good luck.

"Buy a head," answered Freer.

"What kind of a head?" asked the lawyer, puzzled.

"A human head," said Freer.

"Whose?"

"Well, I used to own it, but it's Dr. Linscott's now. Still, I've always had a fondness for it, and I want to get it back."

"Pardon me," said the lawyer, solicitously, "but were you ever in an asylum?"

"Never."

"I suppose it's all right," remarked the lawyer, dubiously, "but this talk about buying a head when you already have one —"

"Oh, hang it all! a fellow likes to own the head he uses, doesn't he?"

"Of course. I never knew a man who didn't own his head."

"Well, you know one now," exclaimed Freer, irritably. "This isn't my head."

"No?"

"No. I have title only from the neck down."

"Then who is it talking to me?" demanded the lawyer.

Here was a new problem, and a startling one. The head was doing all the talking.

"Confound it!" cried Freer, "don't make this tangle any worse than it is now. I've had a year of it, and I'm nearly crazy."

"I believe you," said the lawyer, "but unfortunately I have no discretion in the matter of paying over this money. However, I'll give you a piece of advice: If you wish to retain your liberty, don't say anything to others about the loss of your head."

"Oh, that's all right," returned Freer. "I'll have it back within twenty-four hours."

"I hope so," said the lawyer, but he was very much tempted to send for an insanity expert, just the same.

The moment Freer had his money in bank he went to see Dr. Linscott.

"I want to buy back my head," he announced.

"*My* head," corrected the Doctor.

"Well, your head, then."

"Which one?" asked the Doctor.

"I'd like to buy the one I'm wearing, to use," returned Freer, bitterly, "and I'd like to buy the one you're wearing to play football with. It would give me great joy to try to kick a goal from the field with it."

"I don't believe I care to part with either," said the Doctor.

"Oh, come, now," urged Freer, "don't be miserly and selfish about it. Only a mighty mean man will hang on to two heads when there's a fellow in serious need of one of them. Just put a price on it."

"Only the constituted authorities are privileged to put a price on a man's head," asserted the Doctor. "And, besides, it would be such a loss to science. Why, the value of that head to science is incalculable."

"If you don't sell," threatened Freer, "I'll spend my \$10,000 entirely on ocean travel."

"Heavens!" cried the Doctor, "if you should be drowned, the head would be lost."

"Exactly so," said Freer.

"Suppose I give you a life interest in the head," suggested the Doctor.

"I have that now."

"But I mean, free from all interference and criticism — to do with exactly as you see fit."

"Not at all satisfactory," said Freer. "I must have absolute title to the head. Custodianship won't answer, no matter how easy the terms may be. You can't appreciate the situation, because you've never been without a head, but I can't be contented unless I own it absolutely."

The Doctor was troubled. He didn't want to give up the head, and yet —

"My first ocean trip," Freer remarked, "will be from New York to San Francisco in a sailing vessel by way of Cape Horn."

"Can't we compromise this thing?" asked the Doctor. "I'll give you absolute title to the head, if you will bequeath it to me in your will and release me from all further payments."

"It will be wholly and entirely mine?"

"It will."

"You will have nothing to say about it during the term of my ownership?"

"Not a thing."

"Then I agree."

The Doctor breathed a sigh of relief, and so did Freer. Furthermore, the latter was so pleased that, as soon as the necessary papers had been drawn up and signed, he went back to see the lawyer.

"I have my own head now," he told him.

"It looks just like the other," asserted the lawyer.

"It is the other," said Freer, "but you seemed so troubled about the matter when I was here before that I thought I would come back and tell you that it's mine."

The lawyer puzzled over that problem for a long time, and he finally decided that it beat anything he ever found in a law book. But, if Freer's sanity ever should be questioned in court and the decision should rest upon the testimony of that lawyer, it would be a sorry day for Freer.



The Skyscraper in B Flat.*

BY FRANK LILLIE POLLOCK.



IN Chicago it would not have been a skyscraper, for it was only seven stories high, but here it towered far above every building in the city. It was built by Hickson W. Bond on the corner of Platte Avenue and T Street, a locality which only a year ago had been an almost valueless suburb, given over to corn and potato patches. But a real Western boom had since inspired the town, streets had been extended and paved, Platte Avenue had a car line, houses and stores were going up like mushrooms, and there was not nearly shop and office room enough for the demand. Consequently every one with a little capital was building.

Bond found his title to his lot disputed, and he had scarcely broken ground when he was checked by an injunction. The Greenberger Brothers, who controlled half the real estate business of the town, had bought up the contending claim, and the matter was fought out in the courts. Bond won, almost to his surprise, for his adversaries had spent much money and were confident of success.

With his surprise was mingled some apprehension. The Greenberger Brothers were hard men to outwit, and they did not easily forgive any one who succeeded in doing it. They made their money like Hebrews and spent it like Christians, to their own ends. They had it in their power to embarrass him seriously, for he was operating a large business on a small capital, which had been sapped by recent litigation.

He proceeded with his building, however, and was relieved to find that the Greenberger Brothers made no sign of hostility. He strained his credit, but the building was finished early in October, with a great flourish of trumpets from the city press, proud of its

* Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

new skyscraper. It was constructed, as usual, of steel girders covered with a thin shell of masonry, and was handsomely fitted up with marble and mosaic, with electric elevators, and mail chutes, and complicated heating apparatus. It was christened the Platte Building, and was almost filled with tenants as soon as its offices were opened for rent. The Central National Bank established itself upon the ground floor, and, at the prevailing rates of rent, Bond foresaw a golden harvest. He needed it badly, for he was skating on thin ice.

All went very well for a time. Bond's rents began to come in, and he was elected a member of the Board of Trade. Then, no one seemed to know how, a report began to go about that the Platte Building was unsafe, that the building laws had not been enforced, and that the framework was insecure. Bond privately attributed these slanders to his late antagonists, but fortunately he was able to dispose of them by a signed statement from the Building Inspector. But such rumors always leave some poison behind.

Late in the afternoon of the 18th of December, several of the occupants of the upper floors of the Platte Building noticed a faint tremor of the framework as if from the jar of heavy traffic outside. It was extremely slight, however, and at five or six o'clock almost every one left the building without having given the phenomenon a moment's thought.

Several business men returned to the building after dinner that evening, to deal with the unusual work incidental to the end of the year. These, when they arrived, found the watchman of the bank in animated conversation with two policemen in the outer hall. He had telephoned for help, under the impression that an attempt was being made to undermine the vault.

The whole building was vibrating with a jarring tremor. The floors tingled unpleasantly under the boot soles, and a faint, tense humming sound seemed to come from every inch of the walls. It was quickly clear that it could be from no burglarious mine. The police searched all the adjoining ground. There was nothing to account for the disturbance, and none of the neighboring buildings appeared to be affected in the least. There was no heavy traffic on the street at that hour and there was no wind.

Some one suggested an earthquake, but an earthquake is not localized in a city block. Bond was called by telephone. He arrived half an hour later, and found a large and increasing crowd on the sidewalk, touching the walls experimentally to feel the tremor, and listening to the increasing, droning humming of the framework. He at once started up-stairs to investigate, in which adventure no one cared to follow him. The whole building was empty. The scores of office doors were shut and dark. The elevators had stopped at six o'clock.

The cashier of the bank presently arrived in a state of much perturbation, and, after fussing about for some minutes, went to the vaults and came out laden with ledgers and tin boxes. Upon this suggestion, all the office occupants began to think of rescuing their books and papers. Cabs and express wagons were summoned, and the drivers were offered handsome rewards to go up to the higher floors where the owners of the endangered valuables dared not go.

By this time the oscillation of the building was really alarming. It wavered exactly as a bridge does at the passage of a heavy train. The news had spread rapidly through the city and a mob of a thousand persons very soon filled the street. Among these were most of the tenants of the Platte Building offices, but few dared to go inside.

Those heroes, however, who had ventured up-stairs, were working manfully. Excited by the shouts from below and by their own haste and danger, they fell into a perfect frenzy of rescue. Office doors were smashed recklessly open. A number of small safes came thundering ponderously down the circular stairway, and ledgers and boxes were dropped by dozens down the well. The men burst open locked desks, flung armfuls of documents and stationery out the windows, and turned on all the electric lights till the tall building glowed like a factory.

Presently some one raised a cry that the building was rocking, and the crowd, which now extended for several blocks, surged wildly back. It was true. Almost imperceptibly, but certainly, the dark top of the skyscraper was swaying against the starry sky. The workers inside the building came down-stairs at a run, and were cheered frantically as they emerged. The few police, taking

advantage of the crowd's retreat, established regular fire lines, and warned every one from the adjacent buildings. It was not hard to keep the affrighted people back, however, and every face was upturned toward the enormous structure that was expected immediately to come crashing down.

But it did not fall at once. The swaying motion increased, but very gradually, while the humming note of its vibrations rose to a sound of tremendous volume. Gently and slowly to and fro it rocked, and a shade further at each oscillation. In a few minutes the shell of masonry and stucco began to peel off and fall, in lumps at first, and afterwards in great sheets. Through the exposed iron skeleton streamed floods of electric light from the still burning lamps. The whole immense crowd fell silent, and there was no more noise or shouting. The magnitude and mystery of the event overawed them.

Just inside the fire-lines stood Bond, his hands clenched in his coat pockets, impotently peering from under his hat brim at his tottering fortunes. They were all locked up in that unstable frame of steel. So far as any theory of the catastrophe was concerned, his mind was blank. Only he felt convinced that an enemy had done this, and, being Western bred, he was not disheartened; — only wrathful and perplexed.

Hour after hour passed. In spite of the midnight December cold the crowds grew, and still the skyscraper did not fall. It swung ponderously, far out to the right, pausing as if hesitating to topple over, and then far back to the left. The slam of swinging doors resounded crashingly from every floor as it reeled. It seemed impossible that the fabric could endure longer, though it was a mere network of locked girders, almost as strong and elastic as a steel bar.

All that night the firemen and police swarmed helplessly about the tottering building. Bond had offered a thousand, then five thousand dollars, for a successful scheme for steadying it. All street cars were stopped within four blocks. They sounded the earth in the neighborhood and found it solid. Men were even sent into the sewers with delicate instruments to detect any subterranean trembling, but none could be observed. All the disturbance was localized in the building.

When the gray dawn came up over the prairie the skyscraper was still standing, though it swayed now like a flagstaff in a high wind, and it was very evident that its collapse was at hand. All the glass was broken from the windows, a great part of the masonry had fallen, and it looked like the gutted ruins from a fire. As it reeled from side to side with a terrific rush and swing the creak of the drawing rivets could be heard through the humming of its tense framework.

Bond's only hope now was that it might not destroy too much other property in its fall. He had been furiously busy in helping to clear the adjoining buildings. He had been on his feet all night, but he did not feel either cold or fatigue. Only he decided at this stage to telephone to his wife, who must be in a state of extreme anxiety, for she had sent two or three messenger boys to find him during the night.

The nearest telephone happened to be in the store of a piano-dealer in the next block. The proprietor, like most of his neighbors, had remained down town all night, and was just sitting down to a tray from a restaurant when Bond entered.

As he opened the telephone cabinet something snapped loudly with musical ring in the shop. Bond, whose nerves were at concert pitch, jumped, and the proprietor swore.

"Another string gone!" ejaculated the dealer. "Every blessed piano in this shop, I believe, has snapped its B-flat string since last evening. It's the noise from that cursed building of yours."

Getting up, he fingered half a dozen keyboards till he found one still intact, and struck the B flat sharply. The note was exactly attuned to the vast hum from the shaking skyscraper. A moment later and this string also flew asunder.

"The Platte Building is tuned to B flat," observed the musician, dryly. "Every piece of metal has its musical note, you know. If you struck this note inside your building it would set every frame vibrating. You haven't had any brass bands playing there lately, have you?"

Bond's mind caught the idea like a flash. He recollected some elementary experiments in physics, and the laws of vibrations. He thought hard for a half minute, and then hurried back to the street, without having touched the telephone.

As he returned toward the skyscraper he glanced up, and his heart misgave him. The risk was too great. The enormous dismantled framework seemed to sway till it almost overhung the adjoining buildings. But, mustering his nerve, he went on, pushing roughly through the packed crowd. The police, recognizing him, let him through the lines, but when they saw him approach the crumbling doorway, they ran after him, shouting. But by that time he was already upon the stair.

Bond had not been used to much violent exercise lately, but he went up the eight flights of the circular stairway at a run, without noticing them. The jar and sway of the floors was like the sickening heave of an earthquake. Through the broken walls the light poured freely, mingling with the glow of electricity in the halls. The floors were littered with every sort of office supply — the doors were splintered and swinging. The building looked as if it had been shelled and afterwards looted.

On the topmost floor the motion was so violent that he was obliged to lean against it to keep his balance. The wreckers had not ascended so high, and all the doors were still shut and locked along the hall. In fact, few of the rooms on this floor had even been rented, and it was used mostly for storage.

At the extreme end of the hall a door bore the gilt sign: —

GOTTHARD KLEIN, VIOLIN MAKER. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS REBUILT AND REPAIRED.
--

The door was locked, but Bond burst it open with his shoulder. There was a bright outer office, with several glass cases, badly damaged, containing beautiful violins. Beyond this a door stood ajar into a room, from which proceeded a clear, musical tone.

Bond rushed towards it. The inner room was fitted up as a workshop, and was half open to the outer air by the fall of the masonry. On an elaborate joiner's bench was clamped a bass viol, and upon it a peculiarly shaped bow ran regularly to and fro across two strings, with a monotonous iteration of sound. This bow was attached to a flexible steel rod that played from a purring electric motor beside the instrument.

Bond scarcely knew what he had expected to find, but he was astonished. There was no one in the room. But he brought a hammer smashing down upon the whole musical apparatus, and the ceaseless B-flat drone was silent. Then after a glance about the place he went down-stairs again, sliding most of the way on the banister rail.

For half an hour after he reached the sidewalk again there was no visible change in the condition of the skyscraper. It still reeled and tottered. Then, by minute degrees, the oscillations grew slower and weaker. In an hour and a half it was plain that the building was regaining its balance. It was then nearly eight o'clock.

Bond thereupon looked up the address of Gotthard Klein in a city directory, and started to find him, with cold rage in his heart. The place turned out to be a pretty suburban cottage, with early smoke rising from the chimney. The door was opened by Mrs. Klein herself, a middle-aged, fresh-faced woman, with a faint German accent.

"Is Mr. Klein in? I must see him," demanded Bond, sternly. "I am the owner of the Platte Building, where he has his office. You know, of course, what has been going on there?" he added, at the woman's look of bewilderment.

"No," she said, doubtfully. "I have no time to read the papers. Gotthard is here, yes, — but so sick! He will not know you. The doctor says it is pneumonia. He should not have worked yesterday. He had to come home and go to bed at three o'clock. I have not closed an eye this night."

She led Bond in, and gently opened a door into an adjoining bedroom. There lay the violin-builder, flushed with fever, his eyes shut, but muttering incoherent German words. Sobered by this sight, Bond stepped back and softly closed the door again.

"Your husband builds violins. Does he do anything else?" he asked.

"He makes also guitars, sometimes, and mandolins. And he invents, oh! wonderful things. He is working now on a violin to play itself, like the machines to play pianos. But I ought not to tell you of this. It is not finished."

"Hum!" said Bond, meditating. "Do you know that he went

away yesterday and left the electric power turned on and his invention running?"

"No — heavens! Will he have to pay for all this time? Is it running yet?" she ejaculated, horrified in all her thrifty soul.

"No," said Bond. "I turned it off."



HOW JACK LONDON "ARRIVED."

BOSTON GLOBE, June 8, 1904.

Jack London, the fascinating short-story writer and brilliant war correspondent, now at the front, is but twenty-eight years old. Three years ago he was unheard of by the reading world. To-day he is read everywhere, is sought by publishers, and the pages of the magazines, from *The Century* down, are open to him.

The story of his early privations and hardships,—his boyhood on a California ranch, his years before the mast in the waters of the Golden Gate, his struggle for learning, and the daring trip to the Klondike, from which he returned with more knowledge than nuggets—is known to most of his readers now. The story of how he "arrived," how he first set foot upon the stepping-stone to success, he tells in *The Editor*, the New York magazine for literary workers, incidentally giving the latter class some excellent advice. Here are a few of his terse, pregnant sentences:—

Work! Don't wait for some good Samaritan to tell you, but dig it out yourself.

Fiction pays best of all.

Don't write too much. Don't dash off a 6000-word story before breakfast.

Avoid the unhappy ending, the harsh, the brutal, the tragic, the horrible—if you care to see in print the things you write.

Keep a notebook. Travel with it, eat with it, sleep with it. Slap into it every stray thought that flutters up into your brain.

This valuable advice is appended to the story of his own struggle for recognition. Every one likes to know how the successful succeed.

"As soon as a fellow sells two or three things to the magazines," says Jack London, "his friends all ask him how he managed to do it," and then he goes on, in his own racy way, to tell how it happened to him.

He had many liabilities and no assets, no income and several mouths to feed. He lived in California, far from the great publishing centers, and did not know what an editor looked like. But he sat down and wrote. Day by day his pile of manuscripts mounted up. He had vague ideas, obtained from a Sunday supplement, that a minimum rate of \$10 a thousand words was paid, and figured on earning \$600 a month, without overstocking the market.

One morning the postman brought him, instead of the usual long, thick manuscript envelope, a short, thin one. He couldn't open it right away. It seemed a sacred thing. It contained the written words of an editor of a big magazine. When, modest as ever, he had figured in his mind what the offer for this 4000-word story would be at the minimum rate—\$40, of course—he opened the letter. Five dollars!

Not having died right then and there, Mr. London is convinced that he may yet qualify

as an oldest inhabitant. Five dollars! When? The editor did not state.

But, by and by, in the course of its wanderings, one of his stories reached an editor who could see the genius of Jack London, and had the patience to penetrate beneath the husk of wordy introduction and discover the golden grain—the capital Story, with a capital S, and—rarest quality of all—the business sagacity to offer an unknown writer more for a good story than he would pay for a commonplace one from a famous author.

Here is the incident that proved the turning point in Jack London's literary career, as he so graphically tells it:

"Nothing remained but to get out and shovel coal. I had done it before, and earned more money at it. I resolved to do it again, and I certainly should have done it, had it not been for *The Black Cat*.

"Yes, *The Black Cat*. The postman brought me an offer from it for a 4000-word story which was more lengthy than strengthly, if I would grant permission to cut it down half. Grant permission? I told them they could cut it down two-halves if they'd only send the money along, which they did, by return mail. As for the \$5 previously mentioned, I finally received it, after publication and a great deal of embarrassment and trouble. I forgot my coal-shoveling resolution, and continued to whang away at the typewriter."

And the rate he received for his first *Black Cat* story was nearly 20 times what the five-dollar-editor paid!

Nor is Jack London the only writer who has been lifted from obscurity to prominence by the lucky *Black Cat*, which, as the New York Press has truly said, has done more for short-story writers and short-story readers than any other publication.

Each of its famous prize competitions has brought new writers to the front. In its most recent, the \$2100 prize was won by a young Texan who had never before written a story, and the second, \$1300, went to a lawyer's wife in an obscure Missouri town.

It has just inaugurated another contest in which \$10,600 will be paid to writers in sums of from \$100 to \$1500. This will, no doubt, add many new names to the list of those who have "arrived" through its recognition.

The conditions are announced in the current issue of *The Black Cat*, and will also be mailed free to any one by the Shortstory Publishing Company, Boston, Mass. Even those who cannot write a winning story themselves may earn \$10 by giving a timely tip to some friend who can.

But all should bear in mind that it will be entirely useless for any one to send a story to *The Black Cat* without first reading and complying with all the published conditions. Here is a chance for the reader to dig dollars out of his brain, for what life does not at least contain one tale worth telling?

The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vol. IX., No. 10.
Whole No., 106.

JULY, 1904.

5 cents a copy.
50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories—every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION.—*The entire contents of THE BLACK CAT are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

The Psychologist's Masterpiece.*

BY J. ROWE WEBSTER.



O keep late hours when at college is the privilege of those who work, as well as of those who roister, and it should not, therefore, seem strange when I remark that it was half-past two in the morning before I closed my books. To my disgust, I was nervously wide awake—a fact which would make it necessary for me to take a walk in the open air before turning in, if I wished to get any sleep before the examination on the morrow. There was absolutely no help for it, and, a few moments afterward, the night had received me into its keeping. A lonely pedestrian, I walked up the middle of the straight town road that went past the dormitory where I had my room.

The air was as nipping and eager as it was on that wonderful night at Elsinore when the Ghost appeared to Hamlet. I had not been out five minutes before I found a zest in the walk, which I had looked forward to as such an irksome duty, and, as my tired eyes became braced to activity by that peculiarly clean sensation of intense cold, I looked about me. The snow and the moon together made the night like some glorious transfiguration of noon-day.

* Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

I peered ahead of me, along the broad, straight highway. At first it seemed to be clear for its entire length, but, as I continued to gaze in order to fix upon some tree or post by the roadside, which should serve as a goal before I turned back to the dormitory, I became aware of a black figure in the distance — evidently some other lonely night-wanderer, who, like myself, might have been sitting up over his books in preparation for the test next day. I hurried my pace and, as the other was coming on at a fair gait, we rapidly approached each other.

To my surprise, as the other man came near and went past me, I noted the following facts, as best I could in the moonlight: He was not young, but was an elderly individual with bushy gray whiskers and gray hair, which fluffed out from under the rim of a silk hat, pulled down hard below the normal hat-line. On his feet were rubber boots, that came up as far as the knee, and his hands, as he passed me at a slow dog-trot, were thrust into the side-pockets of a square-cut jacket, which in front was closely buttoned about his spare body, and which at the sides was held in snug by the pressure of his elbows. His whole appearance was so unusual that, after he had passed me, I stopped and watched him turn down a side street, to disappear behind the neighboring corner house. His figure was slender, his step light, and his coming and going had been practically noiseless. I had not been able to get much of a view of his face, for he had continually kept his eyes upon the ground. He had not once altered his pace, and had turned the corner with a methodical air which suggested that his mode of taking exercise was not an unusual one. Altogether, there had been something of deep pathos about his entire bearing. It was as if a lonely old gentleman in his declining years had watched the college athletes taking their daily sprint up and down the street before his windows, had realized that his own physical education had been neglected, and had made up his mind to solace himself with a regular, nocturnal trot round the neighborhood — at a time when few would see him, and when nobody would be in a humor to laugh at him.

I finished my walk, slept well, and on the next day wrote a good examination. Then, in the afternoon, as my head felt tired, I took a rest by doing something which I had long been meaning

to do — I made a call on a classmate of my father who lived in town, and to whom I had from my father a letter of introduction. This letter, to my shame be it spoken, was grimy with the dust of my desk, in which it had been reposing for the better part of three years.

Dr. Burton was at home, and glad to see me in spite of my gross delinquency, which he had human nature enough perfectly to understand. After a fashion, his ready comprehension was to me a matter of regret, for I had expected to see a crusty old foggy, whereas I now found in Dr. Burton a highly entertaining talker, well abreast of the times, and I was sorry not to have made his acquaintance before. It was the old story — “Young men think that old men are fools; but old men know that young men are.”

Before I had talked with the Doctor long, I remembered my little experience of the night before and, hoping that he might enlighten me with regard to the habits of a fellow-townsmen, I told him about the elderly gentleman who had been running about the streets, so long after curfew time, accoutred in silk hat and rubber boots.

The Doctor's cheery countenance grew sad, as he folded his hands across his gently swelling paunch.

“Poor Dexter!” — he said — “Poor Dexter! — it's too bad — altogether too bad.”

He was silent a few moments, and then, quite simply, he took out his handkerchief and wiped his eyes. The unaffected action somehow made my own eyes moisten.

“I beg your pardon,” I remarked, “I didn't think that he might possibly be intimately known to you.”

“No more he is — no more he is! — that is to say, he hasn't been lately. But thirty years ago he was one of my best friends.”

Again Dr. Burton was silent, as he tapped his two fore-fingers together in a fit of abstraction. Suddenly he asked — “Would you like to hear the story?”

“I certainly would.”

“Well, sir, the man you saw last night was Dexter Belknap, who has always been known here in town, though not among you young chaps of today, as Professor Belknap. Thirty years ago he held the chair of philosophy here in college. He lectured well,

and was liked by the students, but he had not held the position long before the faculty began to look down upon him, because his especial hobby was to pursue private investigations in psychology — a department of study then considered unworthy of a serious man's attention. Many and many a time, however, Belknap would come in here of an evening, and hold me spell-bound as he told the results of other investigators as well as of his own theories and experiments. 'Some day' — he would say — 'Some day the college here will give psychology the attention which it deserves.' And now, of course, his prophecy has been fulfilled — but without his knowledge, poor fellow! That is part of the tragedy.

"As I was about to say, Belknap was especially interested in two classes of mental phenomena — dreams and the memory. And one night, during the course of our conversation, he said that his latest efforts had been spent on certain relationships between the two. Among other points, he called my attention to the fact that we not infrequently have dreams which are surprisingly vivid, while we are dreaming them, but which we find it impossible to remember after we awake. If you dream much, you probably have had the experience yourself. You think that you will remember an interesting dream, and, with that in view, as you come to your senses, you try to seize hold of a few vivid incidents in it as a handle to all the rest — only to find, a few moments later, that the whole thing is in fragments, and that the handle is broken off as well.

"Belknap had much to say that was reasonable enough concerning the reasons for such lapses of memory, but when he declared that, as a result of his special inquiry, it would be possible to write a story which should be vividly interesting, but which should, at the same time, throw the reader into such a state of mind that he would not be able to tell what the story was about after finishing it — when Belknap made that ridiculous assertion — I laughed at him. But he repeated his statement, and even maintained that, just as one repeatedly dreams the same dream, and remembers that it is the same while he is dreaming it, only to wake up and find he has forgotten it, as he always has forgotten it before, so it would be possible to write a story impossible to remember even though repeatedly perused.

"I stumped him to write such a yarn, and he left that night promising to make the attempt. Nay, he was fairly wild to make it.

"On the day after that call of his—he had come to bid me good-bye—I went off on a trip to Germany for a special course of study, and did not get back for nearly a year. Meanwhile, I had forgotten all about our conversation. Belknap was no correspondent, and hadn't written to me even once. But I was hardly back again when one of my patients, old John Pettigrew, asked me whether I had read Belknap's story. I said no, and asked Pettigrew when and where it had been published—for Belknap occasionally had things published by the magazines. Pettigrew replied that it was still in manuscript—he had read it one day in Belknap's study.

"‘What was it like?’ I asked.

"‘Well, now, Doctor,’ he said, ‘that’s where you have me. You know my memory isn’t so good as it used to be, and I’m sorry to say that I can’t remember a word of it. All I know is that I enjoyed reading it immensely. It was mighty fine.’

"As Pettigrew said this, I suddenly remembered what Belknap had asserted that night before I left, and how I had stumped him to put his theory into practice, and immediately I began to wonder whether old John Pettigrew's lapse of memory were merely a matter of chance, or whether he actually had been hoodwinked by a thought-juggler.

"Since Belknap himself was away on a summer vacation, at a place within calling distance of the lady to whom he had been for over a year engaged, I sought my sister in the hope of answering my query, and asked her whether she had seen any story, still in manuscript, written by our friend the professor.

"‘Why, yes,’ she answered, ‘Dexter did write a story, and sent it the rounds of the club.’ (By that meaning a little book-club which we belonged to at the time.)

"‘Was it a good story?’

"‘Oh, capital! capital! so absorbing that it nearly took my breath away. Dexter surpassed himself, I tell you. I never have read anything like it—it was wonderful.’

"‘What was it all about?’

“‘Oh, I can’t stop to tell you now. You will see it in a week or two, when it has gone the rounds of the club. It is to come to you then — Dexter wrote to that effect on the cover.’

“‘But can’t you give me some inkling of what it was about?’

“My sister paused in her work — she was cutting a dress — and thought a moment. Then she said:

“‘Well, that certainly is strange! You will have to wait for the thing itself — I have completely forgotten it!’”

Dr. Burton paused and communed with himself, as if loath to proceed. Then he went on: —

“With some impatience, I awaited the delivery of the manuscript into my hands. When it had come, I sat down to it at ten o’clock in the evening, and read continuously for five hours. I was spell-bound. I have read good stories in my day, but really this tale of Belknap’s went far beyond anything I have ever read.”

“And did the author make good his claims?”

“He most certainly did. To my overwhelming chagrin, I found, after reading the story through, that I could not remember one word of what I had been reading. When I realized that such was the case, I picked it up and read it again — yes, sir, into the very day — into breakfast time. It had the same interest and the same result. Beyond the fact that I knew it was brimming over with life and death, and love and struggle, and self-sacrifice and mystery, I could remember nothing. All my efforts to recollect specific points were in vain. The mere cold generalization with regard to its superlative excellence alone remained.

“My sense of discomfiture was so strong — for I have always prided myself on my tenacious memory — that I did not say a word to anybody. I alone, you see, realized that there was anything unusual about the matter. Though each member of our little book-club had read the story with great interest, and had forgotten it, their minds did not dwell with any curious wonder on their own forgetfulness. With me it was a matter of rebellious amazement. Not a single paragraph, nay, not a single sentence, would stick by me, no matter how often I read or re-read it. The story seemed to throw me into a dreamy kind of stupor as often as my thoughts concerned themselves with it. Not a paragraph, not a sentence, when read by itself, had any sense at all.

Only when I began at the beginning and read several continuous paragraphs was any impression made upon the mind — a vivid impression, yet immediately forgotten, inasmuch as whenever I consciously paused in my reading, I not only forgot what I had perused, but could not even make sense of what came afterwards. It was the strangest experience in the world.

“Finally I wrote to Belknap, acknowledged that I had been utterly baffled, and advised him to submit the story to a publishing house. He did so, but not to a rich enough, or wide-awake enough firm. They offered him ten thousand dollars, which he refused to take, because he considered his work worth more to the trade, if it was worth anything at all. Twenty-five thousand was the price which he asked. The story was accordingly sent back to him. The publishing house did not seem to realize that what they had struck was a great bonanza, if it was anything, and not ore of a low grade. However, he would be able to sell it elsewhere for his own price — I was sure of that.

“I was more than glad that Belknap had produced such a masterpiece, for I had happened to hear, on good authority, that he was not to be kept in his position at college any longer, and, as he was a poor man and a proud one, and was waiting for such an addition to his income as should allow him to be comfortably married, fame and cash would come in most opportunely — as they usually do. What a gloating triumph it would be, even for a man not disposed to gloat, to prove to a sceptical, sneering faculty that one's researches in psychology were not necessarily the frivolous meanderings of a trickle of weak thought!

“When I next saw Belknap, however, I was shocked.

“‘What's the matter, Dexter?’ I asked.

“He moaned and shook his head.

“‘I am a ruined man!’ he said, ‘an irreparably ruined man!’

“‘Why, my dear boy!’ I cried, ‘never mind the loss of your position. When your story is published, you will be rich — for you — and famous enough for anybody. Think of it! The college will have to take you back on your own terms in order to get back its self-respect!’

“Still he shook his head. ‘I have lost my story,’ he moaned. ‘It was thrown into the fire by a careless housemaid!’

"To me the matter seemed trifling. 'Re-write it,' I cried.

"Dear Jack, you don't seem to understand! I have completely forgotten it myself, and, what is worse, I have completely forgotten the principles on which it was constructed. It required the most concentrated, the most delicate work of the brain to think my theory out. I did not commit it to paper, as that seemed unnecessary when the problem was once achieved. But to learn that I was discharged from the college which I had tried to serve so faithfully — that shock! — why, it was as if you had thrown a stone at a delicate engine made entirely of glass. Not only has my memory played me the trick which I have played on all of you — the juggler deceived by his own juggling — but also that part of my brain, that working engine, with which I composed both my story and my theory, has been irretrievably injured. I can neither write that story again, nor another like it!"

"Belknap's gesture of despair was pitiful to witness. Fame — fortune — happiness in love — completeness of mind — all gone at one stroke! He grew rapidly worse — there does seem to be such a thing, you know, as paralysis of the will itself — and the only thing that has kept him going so long has been the midnight exercise he has taken these thirty years."

"And the lady to whom he was engaged?" I asked.

"Married him, and has supported him ever since — she is a plucky woman!"

"And is there no hope of his recovery?"

For a moment, Dr. Burton did not answer. Then again he murmured — "Poor Dexter! — he sent for me this morning about half-past ten. When I reached the bedside, he was unconscious. Suddenly, however, he raised himself up and clutched my arm. His face was radiant.

"Bring me paper and ink — bring me paper and ink!" he called, in an ecstasy of delight — "I remember it all now — I can write it again!" — and then ——"

"And then, what?"

"He died," said Dr. Burton.



The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vol. IX., No. 11.
Whole No., 107.

AUGUST, 1904.

5 cents a copy.
50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories—every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION.—*The entire contents of THE BLACK CAT are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

The Pale Miss Knight.*

BY ELIZABETH WEST.



DURING one of the years that I was at the art school, I found it necessary to earn some money to tide me over the next year of study and, through a friend of a friend, obtained a position as a public school teacher in a little New Hampshire town. The business of engaging me to teach the summer term was done by letter. I had never even heard of the place, and knew no one there. But I followed the written directions and found a beautiful little village nestled at the foot of the mountains, some distance from the railroad, reached by a stage ride of several miles. I was to board in the family of one of the trustees, a Mr. Simmons, the letter said.

It was rather peculiar the way that arrangement came about. It seemed that when my letter accepting the position was read in the school committee meeting, Mr. Simmons had said immediately that he would like to take me as a boarder, as his wife had been thinking for a long time that she would like some young person about the house for company. Of course I didn't know that until afterwards, but I could see plainly enough the moment I entered the house and saw Mrs. Simmons, that it wasn't the kind of house nor the sort of woman that took boarders as a rule.

* Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

I was wild to get out my water-colors the minute I saw the house, a perfect bower of climbing roses with a grove behind of the grandest pine trees stretching out towards the hills. When I thought of how the wind would murmur through those pines all summer I felt thankful from the depths of my heart that my lot had been cast in so pleasant a place.

I said as much to Mrs. Simmons when she came to my room to see if I found everything in order, quite as if I were a friend instead of a paying guest, but she didn't seem to like the way I expressed my gratitude. She was a short, frail-looking woman with big, sad, blue eyes and sweet, almost childish, features. When I told her how much I liked the dainty pink room with the tall pines outside, she made some answer in a low tone, but the voice was indistinct and choked and when I turned to see what the matter was, I saw that her eyes were full of tears. She turned away hastily, as if to hide her face, while I felt so awkward to find that I must have expressed my thanks so clumsily that I resolved to use less impulsiveness when I spoke to her again.

Perhaps it was my very reluctance to talk freely afterwards that made her anxious to have things pleasant for me, for she really put herself out all the afternoon to entertain me. We walked about the garden and then down the road about an eighth of a mile to the schoolhouse where I was to begin my experiment in teaching the next morning.

The school building stood on the main road of the village but at some distance from the neighboring houses. It was shaded on three sides by elms and maples that must have been growing many years.

Mrs. Simmons worked hard helping me take down a lot of ever-green boughs from over the clock and pictures; she told me the school hadn't been opened since the winter term, as the farmers were all so busy during the spring; these boughs were the decorations at the closing day. If she had laughed once, or even smiled, or lost for a second her doubtful, grieved look I should have spent a pleasant afternoon, but, as it was, every time I caught her sad, melancholy glance I felt as if a cloud were settling down upon me and I longed to get out into the open air and sunshine.

Just before we came away from the schoolhouse she suggested

that we get a broom to sweep up the pine needles that had fallen upon the floor, saying that the janitor had told her that he had finished his work there when he handed over the key for me, that I might find that if the needles were left upon the floor, the pupils would track them around, or perhaps use them for playthings when the excitements of opening studies began to wane. As she spoke she started towards one of two doors at the back of the room, to look for the broom, I surmised. I walked toward the other door, thinking that I should save time by searching there while she looked in the other closet. I had barely turned the knob when she startled me by crying out in a voice of unmistakable terror, "Not there! not there!" My hand fell away from the knob but I had already turned it, and the door flew open, disclosing merely another smaller schoolroom having its entry and entrance at the back of the building. Considering her cry of alarm I fully expected to have some kind of wild animal spring out. As it was, the room seemed ordinary enough; I turned to her for an explanation of her outcry. She was standing with her back towards me and made no reply. Then I asked if this smaller schoolroom also were not used; she answered in a lifeless tone, without turning her face, that the room had not been used for some years, but that she believed it was needed again this summer on account of a larger number of primary pupils. I found the broom and swept up the debris on the floor. She didn't offer to help me, but remained at the window looking out into the shadowy yard.

Again her sad silence settled down upon me, and as we walked away from the schoolhouse it became so oppressive that I cast wildly about for some remark which should be so commonplace that the answer would not affect her as my questions had hitherto. We were travelling the dusty road, when I noticed a path in the bordering fields, together with a place where some boards made a footpath across a meadow brook. That seemed usual enough. I said: "Couldn't we have gone home through the fields? Isn't it shorter than coming this way?"

For a scarcely perceptible period she hesitated. Then, in a little breathless voice, answered, "Yes, but I'm afraid of snakes," and when I looked at her she did look so frightened at the mere mention of them that I said no more on the subject of the shorter

way. We walked on again in silence. Privately, however, I determined to try that path the very next morning, and when, upon nearing the house, I discovered that the footpath could be reached from their very grove by going across the road, I was so delighted that only the extraordinary way in which Mrs. Simmons had acted during the afternoon kept me from exclaiming aloud.

That evening at supper Mr. Simmons proved to be a very talkative, sociable man, and his wife brightened up in his presence so that we were having quite a merry time when the wheels of a carriage were heard outside, and Mr. Simmons came back from the door with a note which he handed to his wife. With a nod to me, she read, then, turning, said apologetically, "The other teacher, a Miss Knight," referring to the note, "is thrown upon our hospitality for a few days. The doctor has pronounced measles at the Dunbars', where she was to be accommodated, and there is no time to-night to find another place for her. Would you mind taking her in with you for a day or two? Your room is so small that I hate to ask it, but I have no other that could be prepared at such short notice."

I did mind taking in a strange person to sleep with me, particularly after the unusually nervous state in which Mrs. Simmons had been all the afternoon, but, on the same account, I couldn't be horrid enough to object, and so I said a hesitating "Yes," and in a few minutes Miss Knight came in to tea. Then I was sure that I never would have consented to take her to room with me had I seen her beforehand. She seemed at once a most charming and most peculiar person — charming in her person, peculiar in manners. I remember thinking instantly that her name belied her oddly. She might better have inherited Day, for she was tall, slim, fair, with quantities of yellow hair and a beautiful fair complexion, almost too fair, for in the lamplight it was an unearthly pallor. Perhaps, though, it was caused by fatigue. At any rate she seemed too tired to eat, answered in monosyllables when questioned about her journey, and sat staring across the table at a picture over the mantel, instead of rising when she had finished a pretence of a meal. Then, as she finally rose to leave the room, she stepped to look yet more closely at the picture, which had seemed to me a poor amateurish-looking water-color,

and began to speak of the beauty of the surrounding country. For five minutes or more she talked more rapturously of woods, fields, flowers, and out-of-door life than I had ever before heard one even lecture from a platform. Her face lighted, her whole figure became energetic, she spoke rapidly, fluently, even gestured to illustrate her points. I saw Mr. Simmons glance at his wife as she stood with half-parted lips, and a puzzled, concerned, and not altogether pleased expression flashed across his pleasant countenance. But my unexpected room-mate finished as suddenly as she had begun, and when I led the way to the room we were to share, she spoke not one word on the way. Her silence seemed so inexplicable after so unexpected an outburst that I seized the first opportunity to go down-stairs, intending to finish the evening with a book in the sitting-room where Mr. Simmons sat reading the newspaper while his wife read a magazine.

I was on tiptoe with a desire to make some remark about my odd situation and once I caught Mr. Simmons looking at me over the top of the paper. I was sure his lips opened as if to speak, but after a covert glance at his wife he lowered his eyes and went on reading, without making any remark. Then, after a few minutes more, when I noticed that although Mrs. Simmons appeared to be reading her magazine, she had not once turned a page, but sat holding it in hands so unsteady that the book trembled, I naturally concluded that there had been some discussion which my entrance had interrupted. The newspaper and book were subterfuges to cover a serious matter. Ordinarily, I would have retired immediately from so tense an atmosphere, but the thought of that strange, pale, silent girl in my room annoyed me so that I determined at all odds to wait until she had gone to bed before returning.

My hopes were disappointed. When I entered the room Miss Knight was all dressed for sleep, but she was not in bed. She stood at the mirror combing her hair.

I had meant to speak no word to her until she had addressed some kind of remark to me, but at the sight of her wonderful yellow hair, as it streamed uncoiled nearly to the floor, I was astonished into an exclamation of admiration. That ejaculation proved to be a key, for she began to talk about her hair, how it

had grown rapidly since an illness many years before, how she cared for it, how its color had been admired ever since she could remember, concluding with, "No child in the place ever had hair like Mrs. Simmons' little girl."

"Mrs. Simmons' little girl!" cried I, "where is she?"

"The one who was to sit on the other side of you at the table," answered she, seeming not to notice my astonishment. "Between you and her father. Did she not make room for me? Was there not a place prepared?"

I confess that that answer made a little chill run up and down my back. She talked so naturally of a child when I was positive that no one was at the side of the table to which she referred. Indeed, I had noticed the extra plate when first we sat down to supper, and wondered that Mrs. Simmons was preparing to lay another when Miss Knight had cut short her preparations by slipping into the chair already placed. Now I remembered that Mrs. Simmons had made an ineffectual movement as if to prevent her, then nervously clasping and unclasping her hands had hurriedly left the room to reappear with some dish or other that she placed upon the table with hands that trembled visibly. I had laid her agitation to her evident nervous condition, but now—now—what was I to think? For a full moment I could not collect my thoughts for another question; meanwhile my strange companion turned and went on combing her hair.

When I *could* think rationally I decided to wait until morning, when I would take the first opportunity to ask or look for the child, though I couldn't understand any of it, and gradually, as I threw off the queer feeling that had overcome me, I made up my mind that very likely Miss Knight was tired, and since she was a teacher and was used to seeing children about, she had imagined that there was one there.

All the time I was preparing for bed she went on combing her hair. It was truly an unusual sight to see the light flash on the long strands as they fell away from the comb, whirling about her, making a wonderful golden rim about her pale face and falling like a golden veil around her fragile figure. I could have enjoyed the sight had it not been for our puzzling conversation and a peculiar manner that she had—of not seeming to see what her

eyes rested upon. I had noticed it when she was talking in the dining-room; so now she looked into the glass, yet she seemed not to see her image; there was a queer, impersonal expression on her face; such a one as a person has who is straining every faculty to help out a recollection.

I supposed that I was unstrung from the prospect of new and untried work on the morrow. Anyway, that was the way I explained my nervousness, for she combed that yellow hair, and combed, and combed, until long after I was in bed and lay watching her, until it seemed as if I could not bear it another minute without screaming. But just at the minute when I was afraid I should have to put my head under the clothes or cry out, she braided it loosely with three or four nervous twitches, blew out the lamp with one whiff and threw herself lightly upon the bed beside me. I was so relieved that with a thankful sigh and a brief good night I turned over and prepared to sleep.

I couldn't tell afterwards whether I had slept any time or not, although it couldn't have been long enough for me to get into a deep sleep—I have always been a heavy sleeper and hard to awaken—when I was startled by the sensation that there was some one moving in the room. Involuntarily I sat up and strained my eyes into the darkness. In a second I heard the key turn in the lock and then the key gently withdrawn. My heart stood still. The next second I made out a tall, white figure coming from the door, and the same nervous throwing of her body upon the bed showed me it was Miss Knight.

“Did you lock the door?” I asked.

No answer.

“Perhaps she walks in her sleep,” thought I.

Louder, “Did you lock the door, Miss Knight?”

A pause. Then, “Yes,” in a low tone.

“Why?”

No answer.

It was so much easier to question her in the dark than when she stared with that impersonal look that I persisted. Besides I was annoyed and did not stop to think how inhospitable I must appear.

“Why have you locked the door?”

No answer.

Mrs. Simmons' unaccountable manner of the afternoon, the unusual manner of my room-mate, the puzzling conversation about the child, all ran through my mind — in fact, all the stories that I had ever heard or read about unbalanced minds took possession of my faculties — but I managed to steady my voice enough to say calmly, "Tell me, do you fear anything in this house?"

Then she laughed, a low, light ripple, that robbed the words which followed of any sinister meaning: "I feel at home — in my own house; but she might come in; I must not be touched; I must give no occasion."

The laugh had reassured me so, together with the light tone that accompanied it, that I felt ashamed of my brusque questioning. With a muttered "Pardon me," I turned again for sleep. Then the thought of what was meant by some one's coming in and not being touched startled me anew. But there seemed no way to open the question; she had laughed at my fears, and so, after an hour or so of restless tossing, during which time she did not offer to speak, although I felt her awake, I gradually fell asleep.

When I woke again it was broad daylight. Miss Knight was combing her hair. On first waking it seemed to me that she had been combing her hair all night, and yet not she, but a little girl who went in and out of the locked door. My eyes flew to the door; there was the key; I could almost believe that I had dreamed of its being withdrawn at all.

I intended to make an inquiry about Mrs. Simmons' little girl the next remark after my good morning to our hostess, and I carried out my intention, but as soon as the words were out of my mouth, an accident happened that took up our attention so completely that I did not notice until several hours afterwards that I had received no reply.

Mrs. Simmons was just setting the coffee-pot down and her hand must have slipped, for the pot tipped forward, upsetting its entire contents upon the snowy cloth. We all jumped to our feet to escape a scalding, but Mrs. Simmons, who cried out, as if in pain, and then fainted, falling full length upon the floor.

While we were clearing up the table as best we could, Mr.

Simmons carried his wife into an adjoining room, putting aside our proffers of help, and, by the time we had eaten what breakfast we could get from the table, he reappeared to tell us that no doubt his wife would recover before noon, that he would see that we had a lunch sent to us at school, as the noon recess was short and it would be too far to come home on a warm day.

Miss Knight took naturally to the shorter walk through the fields to the schoolhouse, even going ahead, quite shaming my shadow of Mrs. Simmons' fear of snakes. I had expected to get her to give me some suggestions about opening school, but she monopolized the time making acquaintance with every flower and bird on the way, even stopping long enough at the brook to follow its meanderings a few steps.

She gathered her little flock in the small room that had been unused so long, and, at intervals during my busy day, I wondered at the silence that prevailed in the adjoining room. However, there was so much for me to do in a hundred ways that the long afternoon session had ended and the pupils had made a noisy exit a full hour before I thought of my teaching companion.

Then, as I sat at the old-fashioned desk, enjoying the quiet that stole in through the open windows from the still June sunset, she interrupted my reverie by appearing suddenly, a pale figure, lighting up the dusky rectangle made by the opened door between the schoolrooms, with the question, "Have you seen her hat?"

"Whose hat?" I asked.

"Mrs. Simmons' little girl's."

"I haven't seen Mrs. Simmons' little girl yet," I answered shortly, "let alone her hat."

"She must have lost it on the way home," replied Miss Knight, closing the door again as suddenly and as silently as she had opened it.

I was annoyed at her persistency. This was now the third time within twenty-four hours that she had spoken of something that I didn't understand.

"I don't believe Mrs. Simmons has any little girl," I said half aloud.

The last word was not out of my mouth when, "Please, I can't

find my hat, and I've looked everywhere," came a tiny, childish voice at my right hand.

There stood a perfect little miniature of a girl, soft light curls clustering short about a tiny troubled face, as she raised an appealing little bare arm in the school manner.

"You must have lost it on the way home," echoed I, without any conscious effort.

"I've looked everywhere." The troubled voice trailed off into the gathering shadows of the trees outside as she backed out of the door and a sudden rush of cool air closed it in front of her.

"She's too little to go home alone at this hour; I'll go along with her and help her look for her hat," thought I, hastening to lock my desk and preparing to follow her. I became conscious of what seemed the sudden fall of night and stepped to the door to call Miss Knight. Her room was empty and dark, with drawn curtains and closed entrance.

"She must have gone out the back door while I was speaking with the child." I hurriedly locked my door and started in the direction of the brookside path. No child was in sight; neither was Miss Knight. With the idea of overtaking one, or perhaps both, at the brook crossing, I made my way along the path, and, as I came in sight of the brook, was delighted to see, half buried in the long grass, a child's straw hat, with long pink streamers entangled in the grass stems. I stooped to pick up the hat. My fingers grasped only the sharp edges of the coarse sedges.

As if the rough contact jarred a dull mind to consciousness, cleared a dimmed sight, the picture of the child as she had stood in the schoolroom door flashed across my mind's eye, and I remembered that as she stood *facing* me I could see plainly a long braid of yellow hair, tied with a pink ribbon, hanging at her back.

I screamed; I ran; I am sure that had any person met me between that brook and the Simmonses', the townspeople would have had ample reason for dispensing with my services as a teacher.

As it was, I had the good fortune in my mad flight to meet Mr. Simmons, or rather, he was waiting for me in the grove of pines. I caught him with shaking fingers, and gasped out my story. He led me to a seat among the trees, and, when I

had become somewhat calm, he explained or tried to explain matters.

He said that he had waited to intercept me in order to caution me about questioning Mrs. Simmons about their little girl, for, as it seemed, they had had a child, and when, many years before, his wife had been a teacher of the younger pupils there in the small schoolroom, her own little girl, a child of five years, was one of the pupils; that yesterday had been a sad anniversary for them, for on that day, twenty years ago, the little girl had strangely disappeared. She had started home from school in advance of her mother, taking the field path. She was passionately fond of flowers, and had laughingly said that she was going to gather enough wild flowers that afternoon to fill all the vases in the world. Her mother, coming afterwards, found the child's hat by the brook, and, thinking that she had dropped it in her play, went on to the house carrying it. The child was not there. They had searched far and near, beginning with the neighborhood, through the town, county, and even into distant States, but she was not to be found. She had disappeared, completely and forever, that June day.

It had been many years before the fruitless search was entirely given up; then his wife had had a fever and upon her recovery had never mentioned the child's name. He knew, however, that she still remembered, because the child's place had always been laid at the table, and until I had stepped the day before into her little room, no one had entered it. He begged me, now that he had explained about the child, not to question his wife about so harrowing a memory; that, added to the painful recollections of the day, Mrs. Simmons had been nearly prostrated by the unexpected entrance of Miss Knight, who resembled their little girl so much in feature and hair that her presence in the house had been a shock to both of them.

Wonderingly I assured him that I never should have known there ever had been a child in the house had it not been for Miss Knight, and I recounted to him her queer behavior of the previous night. He shook his head and went into the house to find and question her. She was not there. She did not come to supper. She did not come during the evening.

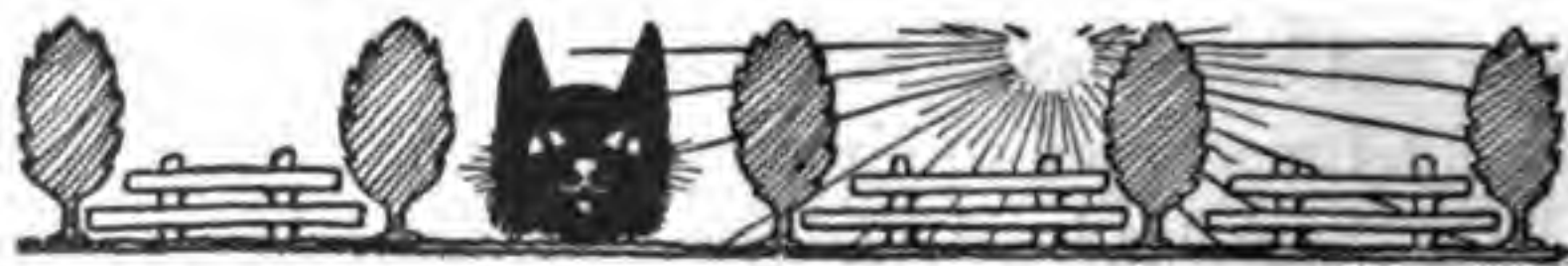
We waited and watched. Finally, messages were sent about the town. One sent to the Dunbars' brought back the answer that the new primary teacher, a Miss Lane, was there, having arrived that night, being delayed a day on account of illness at home; that there was no case of measles at the Dunbars'; that they had sent no teacher to us the night before. They had supposed that the grammar teacher would have charge of the smaller pupils for that day.

We sat until long after midnight talking over the peculiar events of the last twenty-four hours — and ended where we began. Mrs. Simmons showed me a beautiful picture of her little girl, Lavinia, and it was the identical child that had spoken to me in my schoolroom. She showed me the hat. It was the one I had failed to grasp at the brookside.

We discussed the unusual resemblance between Miss Knight and the lost child and it transpired that little Lavinia Simmons had been, oddly enough, fond of having her hair combed; that sometimes it was the only way that she could be quieted when tired or ill.

I moved into another room in the house and finished my ten weeks of teaching, but every day I went home from school before sundown and I could not bring myself to take the field path.

Our self-invited guest that anniversary night? We could find no trace of her. The man who drove her to the Simmonses' house that night could not be identified. The note she brought could not be found. But it was discovered that she had done no ordinary school work that day. She had kept the children quiet and interested by talking to them of woods, fields, and flowers, and she had told them many stories — among them being that of the strange disappearance of little Lavinia Simmons.



The Hypnotic Signs.*

BY EDGAR DAYTON PRICE.



RIDICULOUS!" I exclaimed.

"Perfectly feasible," my seatmate assured me.

"To make pieces of tin convey auto-suggestions? — pish!"

"The easiest thing in the world," reiterated my seatmate.

The train was crawling along drearily through a mist that dimmed the landscape. I had wearied of the comic papers and the novel I had bought of the train boy, and had gone to the smoker to meditate and consume more cigars than was good for me. At a local station a short, stocky man and a gold-spectacled, whiskered individual got on, and the man with the spectacles sat down in my seat, breaking in on my meditations, while the stocky man sat down across the aisle and puffed absently at a clay pipe.

"My name is Boggs — Amos Boggs, M. D., Ph. D." said the intruder.

"Glad to know you, Doctor Boggs," I said, glad of the interruption.

"Travelling man?" he inquired, inquisitively.

"No, thank you," said I.

"I'm glad to know that," said the doctor, heartily. "Bad lot, travelling men, bad lot, clear through. Well, their day is passing, thanks to a little discovery of mine," he said, "I've originated a substitute for travelling men in the form of hypnotic signs which may be sent by mail and which will bring the orders every time. Bits of tin, they are, loaded with a hypnotic message."

"Ridiculous!" said I.

"Perfectly feasible," said the doctor, composedly, and proceeded to enlighten me about the hypnotic signs, after taking a pinch of

* Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

snuff from a box which he produced from a pocket in his coat-tails.

"I have always been interested in hypnotism," he said, settling his spectacles more firmly on his nose. "I can hypnotize a little myself, and have used the art beneficially in my practice. The subject of influencing the human mind through inert agencies has been a matter of study and experiment with me for years, but I lacked the medium to convey the command to the plastic brain — the sensitive surface that should take the message and give it forth to the unwitting recipient.

"I had a theory that for years I had no chance to work out. It was that the medium lay in the human brain itself, in that part called the cerebellum or little brain, the organ of the sensory impressions. What I wanted was such a brain from a live, healthy man, which was naturally difficult to procure. Chance helped me one day, when there was a wreck on the railroad near me, and I was called professionally. Lying on the ties in the midst of the debris was the thing I had waited so long for — a splendid cerebellum freshly separated from its owner. You can imagine my joy and my impatience to prove the lurking theory, which, if it proved true, would send my name down the ages with those of Pasteur and Jenner as epoch-makers.

"Tremblingly I made an etherious emulsion of that precious brain," said the doctor. "Casting about for a vehicle to use it on, I found a piece of bright tin — the very thing. Then I was ready for a test, and placing the hypnotic sign before me, I concentrated my will and mentally printed a simple command on the little plate, which I then enclosed in an envelope, and, taking the precaution to have my housekeeper address it, sent it to the druggist who habitually put up my prescriptions.

"The command was for my friend to come up to my house and have a drink — not a complex message. Judge of my delight when the druggist appeared the next day, hypnotic sign in hand.

"‘Here’s a funny thing, Doc,’ he said, ‘this bit of tin without a mark or scratch on it came in the mail this morning. The thought occurred to me that you — say, Doc, what’s the matter with having a little something hot?’

"There it was, come down to the office and have a little some-

thing hot — my very command,” said the doctor, beaming through his spectacles. “What a confirmation of my hopes! I mixed my friend a good warm toddy and took one myself, and then told him of my wonderful discovery.

“‘Bosh!’ he said, promptly, ‘It’s a mere coincidence. If I wasn’t in the habit of dropping in here and punishing your stock of Bourbon, I might think there was something in it.’

“Sure enough, he was a frequent caller and we usually imbibed. ‘Perhaps it was a coincidence,’ I admitted, ‘suppose you take one of the plates and send a message to some one.’

“‘Anything to oblige,’ he said, and took the slip of tin and promised to follow directions. ‘I’m going to collect a bad debt with it,’ he said, chuckling. I heard nothing from him for a day or two and then he came to see me.

“‘I almost believe that there’s something in that discovery of yours, Doc,’ he said, ‘I —’

“‘It worked,’ I said, ‘it worked!’

“‘Yes, and no,’ said the druggist. ‘As you instructed me, I took the piece of tin home with me and concentrated a message on it to a colored man who had owed me \$2.85 for five years. It seemed like rank foolishness, but I sent it off by mail with the command, “Come, Peter, pay up,” mentally printed all over it, never expecting to see it again. But —’

“‘Peter came,’ I interrupted.

“‘Yes, he did,’ said my friend. ‘Peter was scared and indignant. “Yo’ druggist man,” he said, “wha’ fo’ yo’ send me dis yere piece ob tin fo’ a hoodoo, wid yo’ skull-an’-crossbones on de back ob de envelope? If Ah takes sick an’ dies, Ah’ll see dat yo’ hangs for hit, suah! Ah’lows it’s dat \$2.85 Ah owes yo’. Heah’s yo’ money an’ take dat hoodoo off right quick!’”

“‘Sure enough, there was a poison label stuck to the flap of the envelope; my clerk put it on, probably. I’m afraid it was the fear of a hoodoo, and not your hypnotic scheme, that fetched Peter to the centre, Doc.’

“I’m a tenacious man,” said Doctor Boggs, glancing across the aisle at the stocky party, who appeared to be in a doze. “In spite of the doubt thrown on my discovery by my friend the druggist and his hoodoo theory, I knew it was the hypnotic sug-

gestion, and that alone, that had brought the darky to terms. Here were two cases which had worked per programme, the third should be highly conclusive. I made up my mind that an utter stranger was best to work with, and went down to the hotel and found my man in the person of a varnish drummer, a smart, alert fellow, to whom I outlined my discovery carefully. He was interested in a flash.

“‘What a cinch to the varnish business,’ he murmured. ‘Nice little tin signs loaded with a corking strong hint to order goods, and no arguments; order comes back by return of mail! Got any of those tins about you? I’ll try them on my customers in this town. How do you load ’em?’

“This was the kind of coöperation I was looking for, and I gave the varnish man three sensitized plates and instructed him in their use. He scarcely ate his supper, he was so eager, and at once went to his room and, locking the door, sat down to the task of hypnotizing the signs. Unluckily, the house was full of travelling men, and a lot of them wanted my man for a game of poker, and went up to his room and pounded on the door. Pounding on a door is not conducive to concentration, and the varnish man, irritated, besought them to go away.

“‘Clear out! Go climb a tree!’ I heard him sing out above the din as the tattoo continued. ‘I’m busy and can’t come. Go stand on your heads or jump into the river! Stop that infernal pounding!’ They kept the hubbub going until he gave up in despair and let the hypnotic experiment go for the time being, and I went home.

“Now, my friend, you characterized my discovery as ridiculous,” said the doctor, gleaming at me through his spectacles, and again taking snuff. “You shall see how ridiculous it was, in the outcome of this final experiment, for my emulsion was about gone. The varnish salesman was out bright and early the next morning among his customers, and the result of his first visit was a hurry call for me from a furniture factory, where the secretary, who did the buying, had been taken mysteriously ill.

“What’s the trouble?” I asked, in amazement, for the secretary was on the floor with the whole office force sitting on him, while he wriggled and besought them to let him up.

“‘He’s crazy and wants to jump into the river,’ they chorused. ‘A varnish salesman was in to see him a few minutes ago, and handed him a tin business card; he looked at it and started for the river on a run, peeling his clothes off as he went.’

“‘That’s right,’ said the secretary, wriggling again, ‘I want to jump into the river.’

“I turned sick as I recalled the remarks the varnish man had made the night before to the fellows hammering on his door. Here was hypnotic suggestion with a vengeance. I barred the way to the door, and snapped my fingers again and again under the secretary’s nose. ‘You’re all right, wake up!’ I said, sharply. He pulled himself together, gazed at me stupidly, and then suddenly ejaculated, ‘Well, I’ll be —’

“What he would be I had no opportunity to learn, for a frantic messenger came bursting in to summon me to the big organ factory, where the president and treasurer were acting strangely. I went on a run, meeting on my way the varnish man, who was heading for the depot at a lively gait. There was a crowd gathering at the organ factory, watching with curiosity the actions of the two men, as the president, an elderly man, gravely stood on his head as fast as kindly hands could reverse him to his natural attitude, and the secretary made the most grotesque efforts to climb a small sapling in front of the office. Each man held fast to a piece of tin, which told me the story.

“I had had the conclusive evidence that emulsion of cerebellum would carry auto-suggestions,” said Doctor Boggs, wiping his brow, while a wild light gleamed in his eyes. “I had a terrible time stopping the president from standing on his head and the treasurer from shinning up the sapling, for, you see, the original commands had not come from me, but from the varnish salesman, who was miles away. Therein lay a drawback to the discovery, for it was a question of wills, and if the varnish man’s will had been the stronger, they would have stood on their heads and climbed trees until the end of time. Luckily, my will prevailed.”

“Wonderful!” I commented, for the doctor’s story was done, and he was apparently waiting for something from me. “Have you taken any steps to put your discovery on a commercial basis?”

“Have you a strong will?” asked the doctor irrelevantly.

“Moderately strong,” I said.

“Then I want your cerebellum!” roared the doctor, rising and making a clutch at my neck. In an instant the stocky man across the aisle was on him, and a pair of handcuffs were snapped on his wrists, and, foaming at the mouth, he was borne to the baggage car ahead, where his maniacal howls could be heard for some time.

“Mad!” I ejaculated, “Mad? Who would have thought it? And I was just going to give him an order for hypnotic signs.”



A Rule That Worked Both Ways.*

BY OCTAVIA ZOLLICOFFER BOND.



At each flight ascended in the New Orleans hotel her low spirits sank another degree. The all-pervading air of luxury was rasping to nerves still smarting from the triple blow of fate by which Mrs. Adèle Lanier had been bereft at once of husband, home and fortune. Only an imperative summons could have dragged her from the obscure side street lodging to air the cheapest of mourning in view of exquisitely gowned Northern women and interestingly typical Southern men who now thronged the St. Charles on the eve of the Mardi Gras.

But her husband's old Creole friend, Madame, was ever dictatorial, and in this instance the "something to your advantage" cleverly inserted in the perfumed note piqued curiosity, excited hope, and lent force to the closing command, "Come to the roof-garden this afternoon at 4.30 without fail."

There, at the appointed moment, the poorly dressed young widow faced a bewildering array of feminine loveliness loitering, to music that came from somewhere, amid the palms and sweet olives which crowned the top floor. Threading her way among tropical foliage, past parties of fortunate men and women sipping cool beverages with the leisure of the sheltered class, she reached the remote and roomy wicker-chair in which Madame lolled at ease. Almost before she was seated, a bald business proposition was thrust upon her inexperience with the abruptness peculiar to the elderly Creole. Would Adèle consent to live in Madame's house in the "Garden District," which all the world knows is a superb specimen of old régime architecture. "Come, yes or no, without quibble," was demanded. She was asked, moreover, to consider that it was "the old family residence, completely fur-

* Copyright, 1904, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

nished, rent free, observe," as long as she chose to occupy it — on certain conditions. She must bind herself to remain in the house not less than twelve months from the day of taking possession, and Madame's recluse brother, Professor Paul Xavier, must be allowed to retain his room and his laboratory, with board and lodging free of charge. Without doubt it was liberal? declared Madame, with a rising inflection; and boarders, if desired, might easily be secured to fill the roomy mansion, was tentatively suggested, while Mrs. Lanier gasped for breath, trying to assure herself that the good luck was real and not a dream. Meanwhile, the elder woman continued to offer needless arguments, urging that Prof. Xavier, who devoted his time and his large income solely to scientific pursuits, was quiet and gave no trouble. He was eccentric (that could not be denied), but on the other hand he was not the sort of person to excite reasonable scruples in an unmarried hostess, though she were a mere chit of a widow with great eyes and marvelous skin (punctuating with fan taps that were half caress, half rebuke). He was quite forty, was Paul, and looked all of fifty in his scholarly skull cap and loose alpaca coat, and gave not the second thought to a woman. As to location — but all locations suffer by time; and for its nearness to the cemetery, a sensible person should not care *that* (with a snap of the jewelled fingers).

Mrs. Lanier neither heard the inducements nor heeded the drawbacks. From the beginning of her misfortunes, two years ago, her mind had stood ready made up to release herself from distressing poverty by whatever honest work came to hand, without waiting for a spectacular deliverance. And now that the opportunity was offered for her to do the one thing she thoroughly knew how, in making an agreeable home for others to enjoy, her acceptance was as prompt as utter surprise would permit. She was quite ready, when pen and ink had been brought, to sign the legally drafted contract which Madame's business foresight had provided.

By the time Mrs. Lanier had risen from the interview the elasticity of youth, relieved of anxious tension, had asserted itself in the return of the depressed lip lines to normal curves, while hope shone again in every feature. With head lifted from the passing

storm, she looked with new, appropriating interest on the gay crowd, as who should say, "These, or such as these, are my future patrons." No vain boast, inasmuch as, through the kind aid of the hotel clerk, the old mansion in the "Garden District" was, within a fortnight, filled with the overflow of guests from the St. Charles.

"It all happened like something in a book. It is really too good to be true," confided the newly ensconced landlady to sundry relatives and friends, who merely stared at her in reply with lifted brows, not caring to express the surprise they certainly felt that "even poor, unsophisticated Del should be so easily roped in by that cunning old Madame, who has not been able to hold a tenant for her house longer than a week at a time these ten years past. It was left for the Lanier kin to bluntly tell her she was thought by every one to have taken leave of her senses when she bound herself to live twelve months in a house that was notoriously haunted, a house in which the original owner had witnessed from a window the drowning of his two sons, and in which his successor had been decapitated on his own back porch, not to mention the young girl who had been frightened to death by suddenly facing an intruder in the grounds at dusk.

"However," said the "in-laws," with the ingenious cruelty which is their gift, "when a widow is crazy to 'set out,' and sees a chance to do so by taking boarders, nothing will stop her. As to the boarders, though," was suavely supplemented, "they will not be apt to stay."

And the boarders did not stay, notwithstanding their openly expressed delight with the place from the moment of sounding the quaint brass gong at the gate which admitted them to the riot of April roses in progress around the sun dial within the high enclosure. True, they were equally enraptured with the antique mahogany in the thick-walled apartments, and appreciated, to the verge of bad form, the distinctly Southern flavor of the six o'clock dinners and late breakfasts à la creole, some going so far in approval as to ask on the very first day if Mrs. Lanier would let them stay on all summer, "so sure to be cool here with this delicious gulf breeze coming through the wide casements;" or *could* she be induced to "make room for dear cousin Serena — a most

delightful person," etc., etc. Yet the lapse of twenty-four hours generally made a difference, in all save full enjoyment of the French cookery and ample justice done the large claret pitchers that flanked the savory dishes. On the second day, complaint was usually made that something was wrong with the bedroom lock. The door, it was claimed, was liable to swing open at the most unexpected times. At the third breakfast, the same guest, pale and wan, would ask if others in the house had heard peculiar rustling noises late in the night, or had been disturbed by some one entering the room without taking the trouble to open the door. Another day, at latest, and the guest was gone. Though the vacancies were filled immediately, with equal promptness the new comers left. By the end of April the house was deserted except for the recluse scientist and one other gentleman—a well-known New Yorker of means who had come to stay "only one quiet week away from the crowd," and had remained a month, with no present indication of a wish to depart.

It was at breakfast on the first day of May that Mrs. Lanier informed her two remaining boarders that she had notified Madame of her intention to give up the house at once.

"You see how it is," she said, brokenly. "I blame no one for leaving. What I have myself experienced in this dreadful house is enough to turn the hair gray." In an agony of long-suppressed confession she continued, "I have tried hard, *so* hard to stay; there is nothing for me elsewhere; but when, time after time, one sees a headless old man at midnight roaming the halls and walking straight out of the closed window to the cemetery, or is wakened suddenly by a woman draped in white bending over one's pillow, it is impossible to be brave."

In singular silence the two men heard. Prof. Paul Xavier ate fast, his eyes fastened on his plate, while the eyes of the other were fixed on him. Once or twice the New Yorker's lips parted quickly, as if about to speak, then closed firmly, as though determined to be silent. With evident effort he kept his seat until the scientist left the table, when he also rose and followed to the laboratory. The ominously heavy tread which closely tracked Prof. Paul only reached his inattentive ears as an echo after the door was closed behind both men, and the stooped little student

was confronted in his own apartment by the tall, severe-looking man from New York, who looked at him a full minute without speaking, then, through set teeth, slowly measured out the words: "This deviltry has to stop. I've watched your game."

The answer was as surprising as it was ready: "What a pity that Monsieur should be premature. Another day, and the experiments had been completed, the result an open secret."

"You admit your guilt, then," cried his accuser. "You acknowledge yourself the author of the mysterious sights and sounds which have vacated this house of its tenants?"

"But, yes, since Monsieur has made the discovery," was the unabashed reply.

"How dare you!" angrily retorted the New Yorker, in whom intense feeling was getting the better of self-command. "How dare you, with your diabolical, charlatan tricks to ruin the business of an estimable, a *loveable* woman, and drive her from her only refuge again into the cold, pitiless world."

"I assure you, Monsieur," replied Professor Paul, "it is the furthest from my wish to drive the dear lady from this house. I would have her here always remain. To that end I work day and night. Allow me to demonstrate. It will not take one half hour, by aid of the electric transformer and the radium specimens, to convince a gentleman of Monsieur's intelligence that it is a natural, a legitimate operation, the materializing of spirits. Well has it lately been said that 'the day when people evinced their intellectuality by scouting at ghosts is gone. In this epoch of wireless telegraphy, X-rays and radium, unbelief is almost presumptuous. There is opening a world of knowledge concerning the life of the spirit as full of wonders as the world of nature which the last century has opened to men's minds.' Believing this, Monsieur, and availing myself of modern appliances, I have solved a great problem. I have succeeded in rendering apparent to the natural eye the ordinarily invisible spiritual bodies which are everywhere about us."

Waxing fluent in the familiar terms of science, the usually silent student proceeded to explain, saying:

"It is a recent scientific axiom that all matter is capable of resolving itself into ether. Therefore, the supposition is reason-

able that all etherialized matter may, under special conditions, resume its original form. Experimenting along this line, Monsieur, I have at last been able to identify, as the rarified elements of human bodies, certain hitherto unknown rays which reach the earth from interplanetary space, and which are so constituted as to pass freely through air, ether and all solid bodies except radium. By the aid of the latter substance, these rays have been concentrated by me, and revealed to the eye in their primal forms which, as I have already indicated, are the spirit shapes of human beings who have passed through death. Monsieur has not been under this roof four weeks without being able to testify that he himself has seen the dead walk. To prove the theory to the satisfaction of the most incredulous it only remains to make the rule work both ways. Without doubt that is possible. Since substances as imponderable as helium may be reduced to visible form, the reverse must also be true. One more day, and I should have been prepared to state positively that living flesh forms, electrically charged with radium, will swiftly pass into helium. If these solid bodies of ours can thus be made to pass quickly into impalpable elements, then the old, old question as to the possibility of the spontaneous combustion of the human body is settled in the affirmative. The rule will have worked both ways. I have only to ascertain the exact tension required to render one's body transmutable, before announcing the discovery to the world. It is a discovery to bring wealth and fame to the discoverer, and enable him to give his hand in marriage to the one woman on earth who has enchained this heart," cried the wizened little man, slapping the left alpaca lapel with five yellow, shrivelled fingers, "for, let me whisper to Monsieur, there is one other discovery greater yet than all," he continued, distorting his wrinkled face with amazing leers.

"On the 18th of last month I learned that love and electricity, these two forces, shall eventually subdue creation. And now I am free to lead to the altar the adorable Adèle Lanier."

"Not with my consent, you fool," ejaculated his impatient auditor. "This morning's mail will bring to Mrs. Lanier's hand a declaration from me which I trust will make your intentions superfluous. I had not the courage to speak, yet you have the

effrontery to count her acceptance of you as a foregone conclusion!"

"Sir!" hissed Prof. Paul, "it is an unfair advantage that Monsieur has taken. I, too, shall write. The morning's mail will bring to her the offer also of my heart and hand with all the wealth and fame that shall be mine from the result of the rule that works both ways. Unlike Monsieur, I shall not be so rude as to ask the written or spoken reply. A rose, placed by her fair hand upon my plate at luncheon, shall suffice to assure me that my suit is acceptable."

"Failing the rose?" cynically suggested his rival.

"Impossible, Monsieur! But stay. Failing the rose, I pledge myself to no longer trouble the lady or Monsieur or any one else in this disappointing world."

.
When the two boarders entered the dining room at noon the young widow Lanier sat, blushing furiously, at the head of a table whereon flowers were conspicuously absent. The creole sank dejectedly into his usual seat on her left, staring blankly at his plate. Then, with a sudden impulse of hope, lifting it gingerly, to find underneath only the cloth. While he was so engaged, the hostess extended her right hand, which had been hidden in her lap, and dropped from slightly trembling fingers a long-stemmed white rose upon the plate of his rival, opposite. Livid with emotion, the disappointed suitor bounded from his seat, and tore out of the room, thus removing the only hindrance to a charming tableau à deux, which followed immediately upon his exit.

Presently the gong clanged furiously at the gate. Hostess and guest had scarcely regained composure before Madame burst in upon them. "What folly is this?" she cried, fluttering Adèle's note derisively. "Apparitions, noises, bah!"

Meanwhile, Professor Xavier had returned. As he advanced into the room he trailed after him two long, insulated wires, and pressed to his head the open mouth of a small glass jar in which glowed a minute, strange substance.

Madame's tirade was in full swing when, glancing at her brother, her incomplete sentence ended in a wild shriek. All three gazed on the scientist, appalled at the spectacle he pre-

sented. First headless, then trunkless, armless, formless, he was fast disappearing from view. Before they could collect their senses and rush to the rescue, he had vanished altogether, in an incredible manner, leaving no trace behind, unless it were the slightly scorched mark on the rug where he had stood.

Completely unnerved by the shock, Madame was long ill, and had not the spirit, when she finally recovered, to contest the will, dated April 18th, by which her brother had bequeathed to Adèle Lanier his entire estate. Not another scrap of writing was found in the vanished scientists' laboratory. With himself he had chosen to let perish all knowledge of the rule that worked both ways.



The Black Cat Prize Story Contest.

Here are the winners in the short-story competition which closed October 12, 1904.

1st Prize	\$1,500	{ Miss Susan K. Glaspell, Davenport, Iowa. Edwin Carlile Litsey, Lebanon, Ky. Adeline Knapp, Mill Valley, Calif.
2d Prize	\$1,200	{ Stanley R. Osborn, Omaha, Nebr. Bradley Gilman, Boston, Mass. Mr. W. H. Osborne, Newark, N. J.
3d Prize	\$700	{ Jack London, Oakland, Calif. Mr. W. L. Lockwood, Saratoga, N. Y.
4th Prize	\$300	Frank Lillie Pollock, Toronto, Canada.
5th Prize	\$300	Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.
6th Prize	\$200	Birdsall Jackson, Wantagh, N. Y.
7th Prize	\$200	Miss Mary B. Mullett, Clinton, Iowa.
8th Prize	\$200	Frank X. Finnegan, Chicago, Ill.
9th Prize	\$200	Charles McIlvaine, Cambridge, Md.
10th Prize	\$200	Mr. I. C. Davidson, Carthage, Ill.
11th to 30th	\$3,000	{ Mr. C. B. Loomis, Fanwood, N. J. Mr. W. T. Arndt, London Times. Mr. Chapin Howard, Grafton, Vt. Miss Catherine Carr, St. Charles, Ill. H. J. Hoyt, Mifflintown, Pa. Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif. Florence Seyler Thompson, Merrill, Wisc. Mr. Hays Blackman, Sedalia, Mo. Mr. A. W. North, Woodland, Calif. Mrs. I. F. Mather, Germantown, N. Y. Mrs. Jennie M. Chenery, Jamestown, N. D. Miss Frances Grover, Washington, D. C. Mr. Clifford Howard, Washington, D. C. Pauline C. Bouvé, Boston, Mass. Mrs. Frank P. Penfield, Houston, Texas. Ward Wilson, Coronado, Calif. Miss Catherine Young Glen, Elizabeth, N. J. Miss Anna McClure Sholl, New York, N. Y. Franklin P. Carrigan, Philadelphia, Pa. W. George Gribble, Cambridge, Mass.
20 Prizes of	\$150.00 each	
31st to 60th	\$3,000	{ John M. Oskison, New York, N. Y. Edmund S. Middleton, Yonkers, N. Y. Miss Susan K. Glaspell, Davenport, Iowa. Miss Grace S. Shephard, Brunswick, Maine. Lucretia D. Clapp, Burlington, Iowa. Arthur Stanley Riggs, New York, N. Y. Ethel Claire Randall, Chicago, Ill. Miss Florence Olmstead, Savannah, Ga. Fred S. Brown, Brooklyn, N. Y. John Cain, Salt Lake City, Utah.
30 Prizes of	\$100.00 each	

**30 Prizes of
\$100.00 each**
(Continued)

Anne de B. Scotland, Denver, Colo.
W. T. Fernandez, Brooklyn, N. Y.
George Seibel, Pittsburg, Pa.
George R. Chester, Connersville, Ind.
Caroline Ticknor, Jamaica Plain, Mass.
Mrs. H. M. Papworth, Sanford, Florida.
Crete Warren, St. Paul, Minn.
Mr. Chapin Howard, Grafton, Vt.
Miss Anne Pilsbury, Boston, Mass.
Miss Jane Pratt, Roxbury, Mass.
Mr. A. W. North, Woodland, Calif.
Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.
Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif.
Clifford Howard, Washington, D. C.
Richard Barker Shelton, Hampton, N. H.
Miss Violet Melville, Guatemala, C. A.
Elizabeth Lambert Wood, Portland, Oregon.
James O. Fagan, Waltham, Mass.
Mr. B. R. Carlisle, Ashtabula, Ohio.
Mrs. Ethel Watts Mumford, New York, N. Y.

To the \$11,000 for prizes \$1,500 was added for the following writers, for stories which failed to win prizes, but were deemed available : —

**Stories
Purchased } \$1,500**

Philip L. Allen, New York, N. Y. ; Mrs. Mary Foote Arnold, Terre Haute, Ind. ; Don Mark Lemon, San Francisco, Calif. ; Miss Jessie Beals, Boston, Mass. ; Robert Cooke Bicknell, Chattanooga, Tenn. ; Shannon Birch, Hanover, Kans. ; Lieut. F. V. S. Chamberlain, Fort Logan, Colo. ; Walter Church, Yellville, Ark. ; Miss J. L. Glover, McPhersonville, S. C. ; Miss Irene Hardy, Palo Alto, Calif. ; Frances Henry, Chicago, Ill. ; Stanley Edwards Johnson, Boston, Mass. ; Miss Camilla J. Knight, Gloucester, Mass. ; Will Lisenbee, Cherokee, Kans. ; Winona Wilcox Payne, Cleveland, Ohio. ; Joseph Noel, Oakland, Calif. ; Henry Oyen, Chicago, Ill. ; Mary A. Sheehan, Philadelphia, Pa. ; Geo. W. Summers, Parkersburg, W. Va. ; Frank H. Sweet, Waynesboro, Va.

No previous contest brought so many fascinating stories of the sort which THE BLACK CAT was the first to call into life and which won for this magazine the title, "The story-telling hit of the age," and never before were so many tales of equal merit received. This latter fact made necessary a division of some of the prizes, which contingency was provided for in the conditions governing the contest. Therefore, the second prize of \$1,000 was increased to \$1,200 and the third prize of \$500 was increased to \$700. Writers whose stories failed to gain prizes, but were found available for purchase, received \$1,500, thus bringing the total to \$12,500 cash. Manuscripts were received from every part of the globe. Thirty-one states of the Union, Canada, England, and Central America are represented in the winning list. The State

of California, which carries off nearly \$2,500, leads both in number of manuscripts submitted and winnings. Both sexes share almost equally in the honors, the sum of \$12,500 going to forty-three men and thirty-two women. The prizes were paid by certified checks on The International Trust Company, Boston, Mass.

Now a word as to the manner and method of making the awards and the complaints of certain contestants whose stories were rejected. Ever since the first number of *THE BLACK CAT* was issued ten years ago its founder and publisher has passed final judgment on the stories submitted for its pages. In the contest just closed he personally read, between July 1st and November 30th, more than seven thousand manuscripts. Of the remaining stories submitted he examined many hundred which had been passed up to him by competent, experienced assistants, each of whom is permanently employed by the magazine and thoroughly familiar with its requirements and rules. To guard against the slipping through of a "Black Cat story," a cash reward was paid to each assistant reader, in addition to his salary, for every story passed up by him to the publisher and found worthy of a prize. The imperative instructions were, "If it's worth reading pass it up." As a further precaution against a slip of head or hand, a reward of \$25 per story was paid to the second reader who passed up a manuscript marked unavailable by a first reader and found by the publisher to be worthy of a prize.

Every manuscript was judged solely upon its merits as a story, the name or fame of a writer receiving no consideration whatever. Hundreds of stories from leading authors, educators, public men and women, whose names might add lustre to The Roll of Honor, were returned simply because they did not meet the requirements. The publisher of *THE BLACK CAT* holds that he is the best judge of what is available for his publication. He knows that when he founded his periodical he founded something entirely outside of conventional lines — something which strongly appealed to intelligent, discriminating people. And while he is willing to accept the verdict of these he cannot accept the verdict of contestants, nor will he enlist the services of a committee of distinguished judges who cannot possibly devote the time and labor which are absolutely necessary to reaching a fair, honest result. Solely upon the excellence of its stories the future of *THE BLACK CAT* depends and no one can possibly be so deeply interested in that future as its publisher. If in exercising what the world over is recognized as a buyer's right — that he who pays is entitled to his choice — a mistake occurs and a really good story is rejected the loss certainly falls upon *THE BLACK CAT* and not upon the contributor whose offering will in these days find a ready market

provided it is what he claims for it. While the field is open to all, the man who writes "prize stories" only should never enter a BLACK CAT contest because there his work must compete with that of thousands of clever, successful writers and be judged, not by the man he beholds in the mirror, but by the man who pays.

A unique bit of fiction received from several would-be prize winners whose manuscripts were returned consists of the charge that these contests are "ingenious schemes for securing subscriptions." The fact is, THE BLACK CAT cannot be issued profitably for subscription purposes. Any one familiar with the printing and publishing business of to-day knows this. Not one-tenth of its circulation consists of subscriptions. Every number is offered on its individual merits by from 12,000 to 18,000 dealers. Every number is complete in itself and may be bought or not bought without missing anything in preceding or succeeding issues. That the magazine is bought on these lines month after month by from 125,000 to 160,000 people is the best tribute to its worth. The condition that a subscription must accompany each manuscript submitted in competition is a necessary check upon the indiscriminate offering of indifferent and worthless manuscripts in such quantities as would render the proper conduct of the contest impossible. Because no other publication on earth has paid such generous prizes for short stories as THE BLACK CAT has paid during the past ten years it is deluged with manuscripts. Even under its present rule from five to forty-five manuscripts have been received from a single writer in one contest, and the reading and handling of the manuscripts has required the entire time of a trained force for fully four months. The publisher will gladly pay \$5,000 to any one who will suggest an acceptable plan, free from the subscription condition, whereby the total offering of manuscripts will not exceed past limits and equally satisfactory results will be achieved as to number and quality of prize stories. The cost of a contest such as that just closed is from \$25,000 to \$30,000 and the profit on the subscriptions received in connection therewith does not cover three per cent. of this outlay. As a matter of fact, the publication of THE BLACK CAT, begun largely as a labor of love, has become more and more so year after year owing to the constant increase in the cost of production.

That in spite of the most painstaking search for the cleverest short stories money can buy it has become necessary at times to print tales far below THE BLACK CAT's standard — this is the publisher's only regret. He hopes to see the day when every story in its pages will be the equal of the best story ever told.

BOSTON, MASS.,
December, 1904.

The Under-Water Man.*

BY PHILIP LORING ALLEN.



It was the remembrance of the good times of my own boyhood days that made me borrow a pole and fish-line from one of the row of ragged urchins along the pier.

Fish must be plenty in the East River, I thought, when I saw my float bob under almost as soon as it touched the water. "Pull up careful, mister," sung out my instructor, and I lifted the pole with proper deliberation. "Lost him," said the boy, for the hook emerged without a fish. "But there's something stuck on it," he added. "Better take it off."

Then he stopped and gasped, and I gasped, too, as I took the hook in my hand. On it hung a gold ring with my angle worm still faintly wriggling inside it. It was a peculiar ring, a diamond as big as a bean with the prongs of the setting shaped like the fingers of a tiny monkey's paw. I had baited that hook with my own hands. I knew it had not touched bottom, for great ships came to that pier to take cargoes. My tackle had picked that ring out of the free flowing water, as if a man were to stand on tiptoe in Broadway, reach up, and pick a half dollar out of the air.

I could see that the sergeant at the police station did not believe my story, though I had the boy to back it up. Yet it was hard to find anything criminal in it, since I had brought my find at once to the authorities. The sergeant and the captain had the ring on the desk and were turning over a bundle of photographs of jewelry. At last the captain snorted.

"Do you know where this ring came from?" he asked.

"From the East River," I answered.

"It's one of the Barnotti jewels," he almost shouted.

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

Like everybody else I had nearly forgotten the jewel robbery that had been the sensation of two years before. An under-steward of a German liner had managed to make off with Madame Barnotti's jewel case. After three days' work, the detectives caught the thief, and he confessed. He had lowered the casket by a fish line to the bottom of the river, and tied the other end of the line under the stringpiece of a pier, where no one was likely to see it. Returning the next night to make off with his booty, he found a stone where he had tied the jewel case, and the end of the line was frayed and ravelled as if a puppy had chewed it.

"That was in the North River," said the police captain, after he had run over the story to me. "This is the first piece of the jewelry that has been seen. How did it swim five miles around the Battery and turn up two years later at the other side of the island?"

When the Associated Press sent the story over the country, people must have been starved for something to talk about, for they took it up instantly, and wouldn't let it drop. There were funny paragraphs about the thing in every newspaper, and sometimes a cartoon showing a demijohn as the bait I must have used for catching rings in the East River. There were no sea-serpent stories from summer resorts that year, but people who took imaginations with them on their vacations kept seeing strange things under water, sometimes shapeless black creatures prowling about dark sea places, sometimes regulation mermaids with long hair and scaly tails. I couldn't guess how many columns were written to explain why, if some intelligent sea monster had stolen the Barnotti jewels, he should take it into his head to give any of them back. I had letters from every corner of the country where there was water enough for a mermaid to swim. I learned nothing from them, though once or twice I made trips up and down the coast and interviewed people.

So things went on until September. Then, one day, I found a note in my mail that seemed really to mean something.

"When I read of your remarkable experience with the ring last June," it said, "I remembered your name. An explanation that seemed to me too strange and fantastic to be true kept recurring to my mind. I did not let myself believe it, but now, unless I have

been grossly imposed upon, my imaginings are about to be confirmed. If you are still curious I shall be glad if you will aid me in probing this thing. You must start at once, as Thursday sees my hypothesis shattered or confirmed. The train you must take reaches here at 10.15, and I will meet it if I can count on your coming."

This bore a Providence postmark, and was signed with the name of Josiah D. Randley.

The man who met me on the Providence station platform was tall and lean, with a face that was sharp, but tired looking. We picked each other out of the crowd in a moment, and he bundled me off to his own rooms.

"We must be off in a very few minutes," he said, "and I don't know that you can spend the time better than by looking over these. I can explain later, on the way."

He pulled out the drawer of his table, and handed me two envelopes. I remembered once having received a letter that had fallen into the river in a mail bag, and was not found for a week. These were like it. They had had a long soaking, and it was in salt water, as I knew when I touched my tongue to one of them. The gum from the flaps behind had been washed away long ago, and tarred string, absurdly heavy, was knotted around to keep the envelopes from falling apart. The addresses were in pencil, well enough written, but blotched. The paper had been of very fine quality. I opened the first letter and the pencilled writing was clear enough. This was what I read:

MR. RANDLEY :—

Remember Tom Cone? You can save his life. You know how to save drowning men. Be ready to do it at the place I caught the sculpin. It will be the night of the full moon. Come before sunrise. No more here. Wrong parties must not understand this. This paper came from the wreck.

TOM CONE.

"The wreck!" I exclaimed, and then noticed that the upper corner of the sheet was stamped with an anchor and the name "Eldebarda." "It must be full two years," I said, "since the Eldebarda went down."

"From the wreck," repeated Mr. Randley, "and the Eldebarda lies now—I looked it up—in thirty-four feet of water off Thatcher's Island."

I pulled open the second envelope. "It's word for word the same," said my host. "If you've seen enough of the first, it's time for us to start."

It was the night of the full moon, as the letter had fixed, but clouds were scurrying so that most of the time it was nearly dark. A buggy was waiting for us, and we drove off into the night.

"Well," said Mr. Randley after a few minutes, "I suppose there are things about that letter you would like to know. I'll tell you all I can."

"To begin with," I said, "who is Tom Cone?"

"I teach school at a village some miles back in the country here," he said, "and Tom Cone was one of my pupils. He was the poorest scholar and the best swimmer that any poor schoolmaster ever had to handle. Four years and three months ago, he disappeared."

"How disappeared?" I asked.

"Everyone supposed he was drowned. I ought to be surest of all, for I saw him go down. He didn't go down the usual three times, but once, with his hands in the air, waving to me on the bank. I've never been able to forget the look of his face and his hands as he went down in the middle of the river."

"I've never seen a man drown," I said, for want of a better remark, "and from what other people have told me, I never want to."

The schoolmaster made a queer sort of sound in his throat, almost a chuckle.

"As to that," he said, "the look Tom Cone gave me was as unlike that you picture on a drowning man's face as yours tonight. I can't get away from the idea that he was smiling. And there was a gesture he made with his arm. I thought it a signal for help, as a man might make caught by a terrible cramp. But even when I was groping under water, hoping to save poor Tom, and afterwards when we had the boats out and were dragging the bed of the stream, I kept seeing that gesture, and when it flashed before me again, I couldn't believe that Tom wanted help when he made it. I had seen him make just such a gesture once before."

"When?" I asked.

"It's almost too absurd to put into words," said the schoolmas-

ter. "Tom was the sort of boy who was too fond of the healthy wildness of the woods and the rivers ever to be in danger of the waywardness that we call wildness. Just once in the time I knew him did he do anything to shake that opinion I had of him. The incident was trivial enough. I passed down the street on a winter evening and saw him with his hand on the swinging door of a bar-room that was the scandal of the town. The same moment he saw me, he waved his hand, and slowly pushed open the door and walked in. Why should he give that same wave of the hand and have the same look on his face if he was drowning?"

"Expressions are uncertain things to go by," I said. "What does he mean about the sculpin?"

"He caught it with his hands in fifteen feet of water," said the schoolmaster. "How many swimmers could do such a thing? He knew I would remember. It was on an outing we took one summer. On holidays we never behaved much like master and pupil. I was very fond of the boy. You remember Wordsworth, 'a pair of friends though I was young, and Matthew seventy-two,' — not that I am a septuagenarian," he added.

"You saw him drowning," I said, for a strange thought was coming over me, "and now, four years later, he wants you to come and restore a drowning man. As a boy I remember a little lake with rock walls around it, where no one would go at night because they used to say that calls for help came from the water. A fisherman had drowned there years before. If Tom Cone is living ——"

"There's something to be said against it," said the schoolmaster quietly.

"But you don't account for the letters."

"If Tom Cone as a spirit could handle the ordinary material, pencil and paper, he could have used my own writing desk instead of stealing paper from a rotting wreck."

"True enough," I said, "and you haven't told me how the letters came to you."

"They were left high and dry by the receding tide. One was picked up on a sandy beach near Saybrook. The other was on a flat rock at Block Island. The rock was barely out of water at low tide. Bathers saw something white on it, and going over to exam-

ine it, found this letter, held in place by a stone. They seem to have been scattered about in the hope that some one would be forwarded. There's no telling how many others miscarried."

For a long while we drove on without a word. There was only light enough from the moon behind to show where the clouds looked ugliest. It had begun to rain while we were talking, and the drops came down faster and faster. We splashed on, along a sandy road that stood the storm well enough. But an hour after midnight we saw we were in for something more than an autumn drizzle. The ditches were rivers, and the wind and rain would have blinded us even if there had been light enough to see. There was no chance of keeping the road — every five minutes we found our buggy tilted half over with the hub against a stone fence. When at last we could make out a farm house and barn through the dark and the sheets of rain, we tried no further, but took shelter and waited, drenched and shivering.

"What time is sunrise?" I asked, after a while. I knew he was thinking of the same thing.

"At 5.32," he said. "If the storm lets us start in another hour we might still make it. I was planning an easy jog and time to spare at the other end."

But the storm did not relent with the hour. It was after three before the worst of it had passed, and streaks of moonlight gave us an idea of the road. Sand and mud from the wheels showered on us, gullies gave us jouncings, and low-hanging trees slashed our faces in dark lanes, but Mr. Randley never stopped urging the horse, and the poor beast staggered through mire and flood.

As it began to grow light, I turned to the schoolmaster.

"Three miles," he said, without waiting for me to speak, "and four minutes ——"

It took a full half hour for those three miles. The schoolmaster's face was set, and every moment he moistened his lips.

"You haven't told me all you know about this," I said.

"No," he admitted, "not everything. Whatever we find at the cove, I'll tell you the rest there."

We tied the horse to a sapling, climbed a fence into a field full of rocks on a hilltop from which we looked over the sea, and started down on a narrow, crooked path. We stepped out at last on a strip

of the whitest sandy beach. It was not ten yards long, and on either side the rocks rose so high that it seemed as if they threatened to close together overhead. The inlet from the ocean was narrow, but the water before us, with the last raindrops falling on it, was deep and of the clearest green. On the sand almost at our feet lay humped up the body of a man. I heard the schoolmaster catch his breath.

"He tried it alone," he said to himself very low, and I did not understand what he meant. "Think of the desperation that made him try it alone."

The man lay on his face with fingers dug deep into the sand and feet just at the water's edge. I took the body by the shoulders and tried to drag it farther up the beach, but by myself I could not budge it. The schoolmaster silently came to help me, and together we managed to lift it to a flat rock.

Yes, it was a man, and yet its proportions were those of some misshaped sea monster. It seemed all body. The arms were pipe-stems, the legs weak and shriveled, but, under a torn sailor jacket, the enormous chest bulged like a great cask. Knots of muscle stood out, even in death, beneath the collar bones. Long wild hair was matted over the shoulders with bits of kelp and sea moss tangled in it. The cheeks and the chin, which bore the straggling beginnings of a beard, were of the hue of a man at the crisis of a jaundice, nearer to green than yellow. The skin was rough, oily and scaly.

I looked at my companion. He only nodded his head slowly.

"You didn't tell me of Tom Cone's deformity," I said.

"He was as shapely a lad when I knew him as any you ever saw," he answered solemnly.

Then we began a closer examination. About the waist was a wide canvas belt, bearing the name of a ship. I unfastened it and saw that from it hung more than a dozen leather and cloth pouches which jingled. I fumbled at the strings of the first one, and opened it on the glitter of jewels. At random I picked out one of the pieces and started. It was an ear pendant, a diamond clasped in the fingers of a tiny monkey's paw in gold.

"For the love of God," I cried, "unless this is some nightmare, tell me what more you know of it."

"I can only tell you," he answered in a strange voice, "what came back to me when I read of your experience last June. Tom Cone, I told you, was no scholar. I ought to say he was no scholar except in things that concerned his own strength and his health. Then his interest awakened. He learned of his own body and its workings faster than I could teach him. It was the first time in his schooling that he had been interested enough to ask a question. But I've never forgotten the set of conundrums he put one day when he joined me on the way home from school. 'I always supposed a fish breathed water,' he blurted out. He looked so serious that I joked him about it, and asked him if it were a personal matter. But he followed up his question. 'If a fish really breathes the air that's dissolved in the water, why can't we breathe it?' he asked. I gave him plenty of reasons of course. I told him we had warm blood, and needed more air in a minute than we could get from hundreds or thousands of gallons of water. If nothing else, our lungs did not have passages for handling such quantities. The muscles of the chest and diaphragm were not powerful enough to force water in and out, as they did air. But he persisted: 'If we *could* breathe water fast enough, couldn't we live that way?' And I believe I said I supposed so.

"He was in school two years after that without saying anything that implied his questions came from anything but a momentary fancy. Then came the day when he told me he was going away, and asked me to come with him for a final outing. Just before we reached the old swimming hole, he stopped and threw back his coat. 'Feel,' he said. I put my hand on his chest, and it was stony hard. I could scarcely believe it was flesh. 'I knew that dumb-bells and elastic pulleys took up a great deal of your time, and that your coats never buttoned around you,' I said, 'but this is something any athlete in the world would envy. You've accomplished a marvel!'

"Tom smiled a peculiar smile, and began a performance that I made nothing of then. He opened his mouth and began to take deep breaths. At first they were slow and regular, but they came faster and faster, until his great, powerful chest fluttered like the breast of a frightened bird. There was no trick about it. He was taking full, deep breaths and expelling them faster than I could

count, as fast as a man's teeth chatter in midwinter. The rush of the air in and out was so violent that the sound it made was a sort of deep whistling.

"We went on to the pool together, but before I was out of my shoes, Tom had dived from the bank, and was swimming out. When he got to midstream, as I told you, he waved his hand with that strange gesture and went down. There's nothing more that I haven't told you. I went down, and did my best to save him, but he fought me off. He was writhing with pain, it seemed, but all the while was groping his way down stream. One thing more — when I touched him at the bottom of the river I felt that same amazing flutter of his chest."

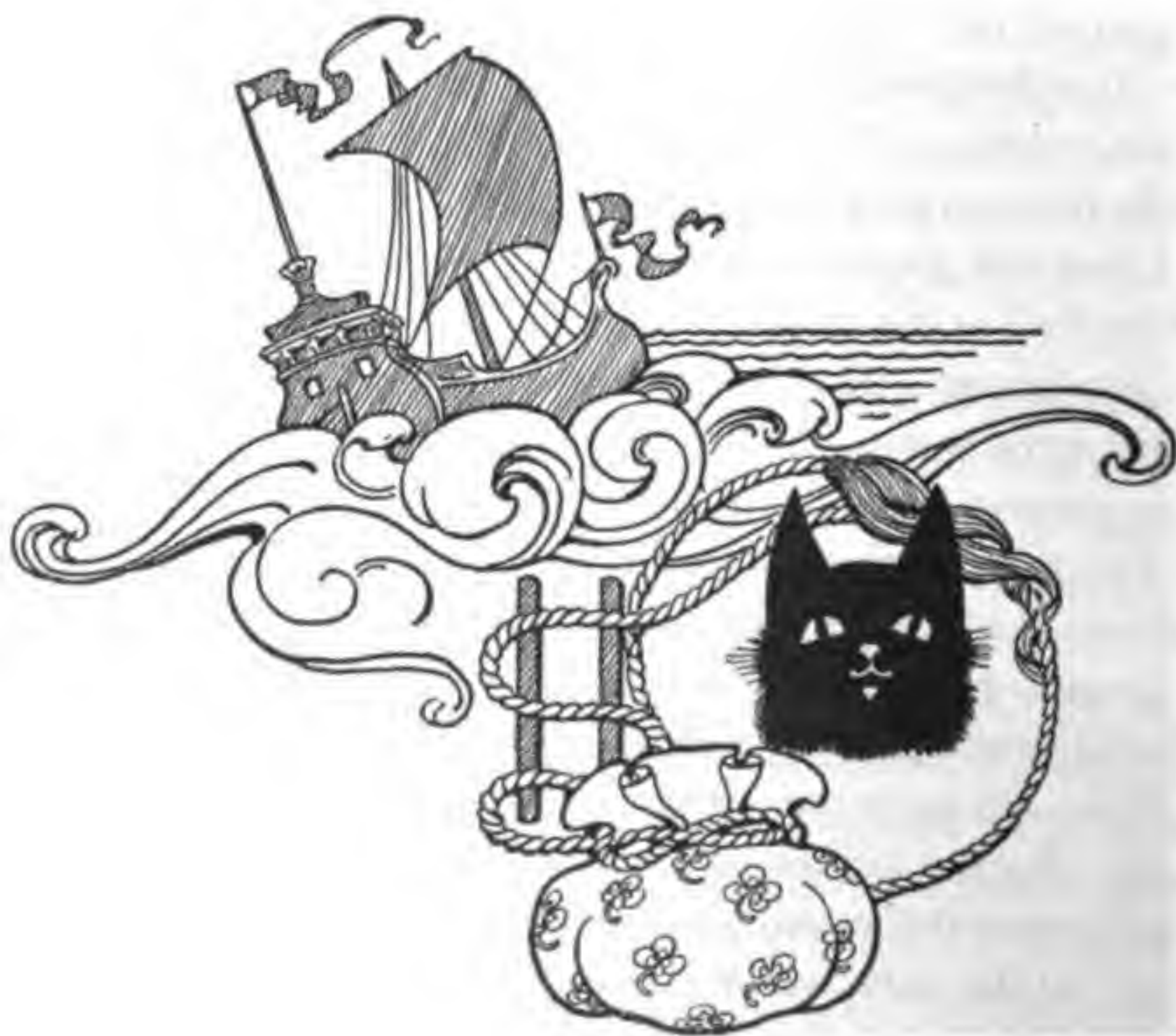
The schoolmaster walked over to Tom Cone's body and rested his weight for a moment on the ribs. "Water, and nothing but water, in all but the uppermost cells of the lungs," he said, "It is not so in a drowned man."

"His weight —" I exclaimed, "that accounts for it."

Well, between us we were not long in piecing out the whole story. Tom Cone had proved his own theory only too well. We had wondered at first at his weak, pitiful limbs. But we saw soon enough what they meant. He had doubtless dwelt on the delights of a free life under the waves, the life of a modern Triton. He had thought of lazy strokes through cool waters, or playful tussles with breakers. But none of these were for him. Swim? The calls of active muscles that he once answered by deep draughts of pure air, would have meant his death. The scant supply of life-giving oxygen which his heaving chest could draw from the water about him kept him alive, but no more. Five active minutes, and he would have stifled. He, the prince of swimmers, could only creep. So he crawled over the ocean ooze, skulked about sunken ships, and prowled in the dark waters about the cities. The prizes of a hundred sea losses were his. The wealth of India was in his hands, and yet the mere struggle to keep breath in his body had tortured him, deformed him, blasted him. His half-distorted mind had seen some hope in the grotesque message of the Barnotti ring. With reason giving way, he had toiled over his appeals for help to his old friend.

As he waited at sunrise in the clear water of the cove, he could

not know that any of his pleas had been heeded, but he knew that his was only a mockery of life, and no risk was too great to run in the effort to shake it off. If none were there to help him, he could at any rate wait no longer, but would hazard all alone. With youth and vigor, he had withstood the shock of a metamorphosis to which only the age of fable could tell of a parallel, but life had gone out when, desperate and alone, he had sought to claim for himself again the air and the sun.



Doctor Million.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



THIS time last year I weighed two hundred and seventy-five pounds. I always thought that if I weighed but one hundred and seventy-five pounds I would be in heaven. Now I weigh only eighty-nine pounds! Some stout ladies, I know, would be delighted to learn how I lost so much weight in a year's time. Now, these are just the ladies I wish to warn. He called himself Doctor Million. He is a tall, slender, dark man, and wears a beard and moustache. He parts his hair in the middle, and puts oil on it. If he should come to your city, beware of him! True, he made me lose nearly two hundred pounds weight in a year!—but the way he did it was dreadful. Dreadful! I don't mean that I suffered much—I can't say that and be honest, and I would rather be honest than be slender. I mean, the medicine he used to make me lose flesh was dreadful. Dreadful to a high-spirited lady!

Of course, I didn't know at first—indeed, I didn't know until last month—what he gave me to reduce my weight. But I know now, and if ever I meet Doctor Million again——. He called himself Doctor Million, I think, because he hoped to doctor the millions—I believe his true name is Doctor Harvey. He was always very polite, but the means he took to reduce my weight was disgraceful! Outrageous!

A lady friend of mine—Mrs. Wilson—gave me his card. He had reduced her weight eighty pounds in two months, and she was very enthusiastic over him. I think she was a bit in love with him.

I'm not saying—but it looked that way. She gave me his card, and when I kind of questioned her about him—that is, if

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

he was a gentleman, and all that — I didn't want to be doctored by a quack, of course — she wouldn't let me rest until I had dressed up in my black silk and went with her to his offices.

He had fine offices. He must have made lots of money — almost a million, I do believe — while he was in San Francisco. There are so many stout ladies in 'Frisco. I think I must have waited two whole hours before I could get to see him, there were so many patients waiting before me.

It kind of did me good to see some of the other ladies. One of them in particular was so very stout that I felt almost ashamed of thinking of reducing my weight. I looked real slim beside her. But my friend held on to my hand, and just wouldn't let me go, and I stayed. I was a bit curious myself to see what kind of a man Doctor Million was like.

At last my turn came, and when I met the doctor I was real pleased with him. He was very affable and gentlemanly, and assured me that he could reduce my weight a hundred pounds in five months, without hurting my constitution the least bit.

I hemmed and hawed a while, but of course I fell in with my friend's plans at last — as I had intended to do all along if the doctor pleased me — and I became one of his regular patients.

When I had paid down my first fee — it was pretty dear, but he agreed to return it if I didn't lose weight within a week — I got a box of pills from him to take. But first, while I was in his private office, he gave me a capsule to swallow. It was larger than a four-grain quinine capsule, and it had no taste whatever. Ugh! but when I think of it now, I almost wish I weighed what I used to, and had Doctor Million here!

Well, I went on just as usual, eating quite hearty, for I always was a quite hearty eater all my life; but within a week I began to notice that I was getting slenderer. I had to gather my skirt a bit at the back to keep it from sagging, and within two weeks actually I was ashamed to appear in public in my usual clothes. I was getting slenderer and slenderer every hour. Why, at the end of that two weeks I must have weighed not over two hundred and fifty pounds.

I was almost frightened to think of it, but Doctor Million assured me that it was all right. He tried to explain to me, like a

doctor does, how I was growing slenderer; but of course I couldn't understand his scientific words. I just nodded my head and looked wise, and said, "Ah, yes!" and he thought I understood.

The doctor had an amusing picture over his mantel. I laughed at it myself, but one stout lady said that it was an outrage. I think she was just putting on. The picture was called, "Eighteen Feet of Embonpoint; or, Before and After." It represented six very stout ladies, standing side by side. Behind the picture was some kind of wires, and every little bit the first picture would change, and there in its place would be a picture of the same ladies, only none of them could have weighed over one hundred and thirty pounds.

The doctor gave me a card with the pictures on it. It is just like this:

DOCTOR MILLION'S	EIGHTEEN FEET OF EMBONPOINT		ANTI-FAT
	BEFORE		
	PICTURE OF SIX VERY STOUT, SHORT WOMEN		
	AFTER		
	SAME WOMEN IN SAME ORDER, BUT EACH VERY SLENDER		

I used to look at this picture and think how nice it would be when I weighed only about one hundred and thirty pounds; but now I know that all slender ladies are not happy.

Well, in a month I was so slender that I had to have all my clothes made over, and I kept growing slenderer and slenderer. I was always hungry, however, and ate all I liked, but it seemed the more I ate the hungrier and slenderer I got.

I know that there are lots of stout ladies who would give a great deal to be growing slenderer every day like I grew, and some who, after they learn what cured me of being too stout, would swallow one of those pills like I swallowed in Doctor Million's private office, if they could only get one. But, ugh! when I think of taking that pill and Doctor Million looking on in his gentlemanly way, I feel dreadful ashamed of myself and dreadful angry at him.

The strangest thing about it was, Doctor Million gave every one of his patients a little box of green pills, and said that whenever any one of us wished to stop where we were — that is, not get any slenderer — all we had to do was to take those green pills according to directions.

I knew of only one lady who took the pills, and truly enough she stopped right away growing slenderer, and stood still for over two weeks. Then she began to grow stout again, and now she is much stouter than before she went to Doctor Million.

That is why I am afraid to touch those green pills. I dislike to be as slender as I am, considering I am quite a tall woman, but I should dislike more to grow as stout as I used to be. So I have put those green pills away in my bureau, and every little while I look at them and wonder if I could dare take them.

I once asked Doctor Million what it was that he gave his patients to make them so slender. But he only laughed and said that that would be to give away his great secret, which had cost him over a million of dollars, and of course he couldn't do that. But he told me not to worry, as it was a natural remedy for stoutness, and as old as Egypt, and that if I wished to grow stout again, all I had to do was to take those green pills. But I daren't.

Well, things went on, as my friends said, from thin to thinner, and when I had paid Doctor Million as much as five hundred dollars, he said that I was cured, and after that I must come to see him only as a friend, and no longer a patient. And, indeed, I was quite fond of him, and did go to see him quite often, and he always seemed to have as many patients as he could possibly attend to; but, finally, one day, a lady in the office got me out into the hallway, and asked me if I knew what it was that Doctor Million gave us ladies to make us slender.

Of course, I didn't know, and I said as much, whereupon she whispered something in my ear that made me almost slap her face, so vexed and mortified was I. But she persisted that it was true — every word of it. Why, she herself had weighed nearly three hundred but seven months before, while now she weighed scarcely eighty pounds, so slender she had grown.

Of course I thought she had taken some offense at Doctor Million, or was sent in by some other doctor to frighten away his pa-

tients, and I was real rude to her. But since then I have learned that she was just an honest, high-spirited lady like myself, trying to warn trusting folks away from the toils of an evil doctor.

Now, you will want to know what this lady said to me, and the day after she got me into the hall I went again to call on Doctor Million to ask him to his face if it was true; but he was gone.

I never was so much astonished in all my life; gone for good, the janitor of the building told us. Why, I believe I would have trusted Doctor Million with my eyes. However, he was gone and there was no use crying over spilt milk; and, besides, I was as slender as I ever wish to be, weighing only about ninety pounds with my clothing on.

The day after the doctor was gone, a number of we ladies who had been his patients all met together at my house, and we talked the matter over, and all agreed that it must be so. Doctor Million — it is enough, I think, to make a proud-spirited woman blush with shame — had given every one of us, in those big capsules we swallowed in his private office, a little snake, and the snake had grown and grown and grown in our stomachs and eaten up everything we had put in our mouths, until there simply wasn't anything left for our bodies to live on, and of course we had all become as slender as shadows. And those green pills were to kill the snake when we had been eaten — as it were — out of house and home, and didn't want to grow any slenderer.

Mercy! I have heard of men having the snakes, but I never dreamt that I should some day have them myself, and I can hardly keep my hands off that little box of green pills. But I know if I should take those pills and the snake in my stomach be killed, I should weigh two hundred and seventy-five pounds within a year, and I do so want to stay slender.

Eighty-nine pounds for a fairly tall woman, as women go, is too slender, I think, and my husband says that it's too thin, too, and I am mortally afraid that he will learn about those green pills and put them in my food without me knowing anything about it.



The Man Who Did Things Twice.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



F commanding figure and soldierly bearing, with deep-set gray eyes, hollow, cadaverous cheeks, and moustache and hair an intense blue black, his singular personality alone had anywhere and at all times attracted special attention to the man; but coupled with this distinguished personage, and singling him out as remarkable in the highest degree, was the fact that he lived in duplicate.

Thus — if on Monday he arose early, breakfasted on coffee, toast, and eggs, afterwards retired to his rooms to occupy himself until noon at his desk; then, after partaking of lunch, quit his rooms to ramble about the city, giving alms to the old blind organwoman, going up and down particular streets and through particular quarters, thence back to his hotel, to his dinner, to his desk after dinner, and finally to bed — on Tuesday he would go through precisely the same régime; arising early, breakfasting on coffee, toast, and eggs; afterwards retiring to his desk, thence to lunch, to his rambles up and down those particular streets and through those particular quarters that he had visited on Monday, giving alms to the old blind organwoman; thence back to his hotel, to dinner, to his desk and papers; finally to bed.

On Wednesday he perhaps would spend the day quite differently, arising late, going out on horseback for the entire day, attending the theatre at night, and to bed at midnight or later; but howsoever he spent Wednesday, Thursday — or the day following — was sure to be a repetition down to the smallest detail.

Friday would see commenced a new series of action for Saturday to duplicate.

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

* The writer of this story received a cash prize of \$100 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

He was the echo — as it were — of himself, and a consummate echo at that, for time and time again he had been watched to see whether he would not make some mistake or fail in his series of duplication, but whenever it was possible for an act to be duplicated he never had been known to fail in its duplication; and, indeed, he had grown so shrewd in the matter that he never did on one day what could not reasonably be duplicated upon the next — if that succeeding day was to be a duplication of the preceding one, and not the beginning of a new series of action.

That this man should deliberately go about living as if his soul were a stereoscope, and life, to be appreciated, must be like the stereoscopic picture, double, was generally considered an astonishing thing; and, besides, it seemed such a reprehensible waste of energy, time, and money.

To fall from his horse upon a Wednesday at a particular crossing, bruising his body and spraining his wrist, was bad enough; but to repeat the accident at that particular crossing upon the following day was a pure waste of energy. To lose a half-hour on Friday by coming down to the depot too early was perhaps an error of calculation; but to repeat the action on the following Saturday was a waste of time. To visit his tailor on Monday and order a new suit of clothing was nothing reprehensible; but to drop in on the following day at precisely the same minute and order a similar suit of clothing could be nothing less than a waste of money.

It was this trait of duplicating all his expenditures that had first attracted attention to the man's singular character. And, indeed, one who coolly and voluntarily paid all his bills twice over was certain, sooner or later, to have minute notice taken of himself and his comings and goings.

Not only was Henry Hobart's character remarkable, but it had an element of danger as well. Any enemy could have committed a series of duplicate crimes or misdemeanors about the city of Weston and The Man Who Did Things Twice would have come under instant suspicion as the guilty party. But evidently Henry Hobart was without enemies; one might add, without friends. His was the best known face, but he the least known man, in the cultured little city of Weston. Not that his character was such

as to repel the advance of friendship, but simply that he drew around perhaps a gentle and kindly nature, an almost impenetrable cloak of reserve.

It may have been that the man's mind was divided, one half acting normally and consistently, whilst the other half drove him each alternate day to imitate his conduct of the preceding day, as a little impish boy imitates the actions of one going before him in the street. Or perhaps he was merely eccentric. But there seemed something more than eccentricity in his conduct when, upon a certain Saturday, he deliberately returned and allowed a vicious dog to bite him in the manner that it had bit him some twenty-four hours before. Such conduct could arise from nothing less than methodical madness.

Living his own life in his own reserved way, cultured and studious, troubling no one, offending none; doubly liberal in his expenditures and never pressed for means, steadfast in his chosen eccentricity—if such it were—and in his face and manner no questioning doubt of himself, perhaps in time Henry Hobart had been accepted like any other man, the curious had ceased to be curious, and his mysterious character, without any further or deeper scrutiny, had become one of the mysteries of human life, had not the man been suddenly struck down as by an invisible hand and the appalling mystery of his death heightened tenfold the mystery of his life.

On a Tuesday morning, at fifteen minutes of ten o'clock, an attendant was summoned by the call-bell to room Sixty-Three of the Sumner House, and upon obeying the call found Henry Hobart struggling in the throes of a strange and unnatural death.

The Man Who Did Things Twice, half-dressed, standing in the centre of his outer room, was battling with the invisible air about him for breath, or, as the attendant put it later, "Like he was fightin' with something that weren't there."

The hotel was aroused, Doctor Thiel was hastily summoned from his office on the next floor, and everything was done that science could suggest or despair persuade, yet in less than ten minutes Henry Hobart lay dead on the floor, within his stilled brain hidden the profound mystery of his life, and still echoing in the death

room his one strangled cry ere death sealed his blue lips —
To-morrow!

It was a strange case, a questionable case, a frightful case, but beyond all it proved a baffling case, for the police came, removed the body to the morgue, intimating death by poison or other foul play, and examined the rooms and overhauled the possessions of the dead man, but who the deceased was, who his kindred or what his former residence, or the cause of his death, they could not discover. The scholarly tomes that filled his shelves bore no signatures or bookmarks, and private papers of any kind there were none. The autopsy made the same day — afternoon — upon the body of the deceased failed to discover any poison, and Doctor Thiel's belief that the man had been strangled seemed without support, as no foreign substance or growth of any kind was found in the windpipe or air passages.

Nevertheless, Doctor Thiel was firm and blunt: "The man was strangled," he maintained. "Make the best of that, gentlemen, and then go to your dinners."

One thing only seemed certain, one thing only was undisputed, — The Man Who Did Things Twice, with severed windpipe and autopsy-marred body, would not duplicate his own death upon the morrow. He had come to his death on a Tuesday, a Tuesday with which — had he lived — he would have begun a new course of action to be duplicated on Wednesday. But he had died, and now for once The Man Who Did Things Twice would fail in his eccentricity. Perhaps for that his spirit would be troubled.

Next morning, while the attendant who had been first on the death scene of the previous day was holding forth at length on the tragedy with certain servant-cronies, the call-bell suddenly rang and the hand of the call dial spun around and pointed to number Sixty-Three.

The man hastened to obey the summons, not noticing that the hands of the hall clock pointed to fifteen minutes of ten, nor delaying to recollect what guest occupied room Sixty-Three. The tragedy of the preceding day had been the event of his life, and he had not as yet descended to the trifles of his daily routine.

As he tapped briskly at the door of room Sixty-Three and put his hand upon the knob to enter, it suddenly came over him that

he had done precisely such a thing before. That at about that time of some other morning he had been summoned by the call-bell to room Sixty-Three—had knocked, turned the knob, entered—and——a loud cry, a shout thick with horror, broke from the man's lips, and he reeled back into the hallway.

There before him, in the centre of the fateful room, half-dressed, battling with the invisible air, with blue lips and protruding eyes, stood The Man Who Did Things Twice.

The ominous, ghostly hush that followed the frightened attendant's cry was quickly broken by the hurry of many feet, and soon again the hotel was aroused and again Doctor Thiel bent over the prostrate and dying Henry Hobart.

Outside and distantly could be heard the clang of the fire-bells, but in the room of death all was sudden silence, all were hushed by the frightful, ghostly thought that the scene before them had been enacted before—the dying man with his discolored face and struggling hands, the physician bending over him, the alarmed, pitying faces of the gathered guests, and the frightened servants huddled in the background. *And the man must die—die as he had died!*

They looked on, and waited. Then the end came, and Doctor Thiel, arising, said, "He is dead!" He had uttered those words once before and under like conditions. And the guests and the servants spoke together in horrified whispers, as they had done before; then the assembly broke up and the hallway was cleared, as before!

There was something immeasurably painful about it all, to live a thing over in that frightful way, to be, as it were, mere puppets at a show, and one day to be to another day as a reflection in a mirror.

For a time those who had witnessed both tragedies seemed to live in a kind of trance, and moved about and whispered together like beings in a dream; but finally the natural reasserted itself, and then curiosity seized them.

What was the meaning of it? Henry Hobart had died and his body had been mutilated by the surgeon's knife. How, then, had he died a second time and his body shown no marks of the knife? Had they been deceived by a ghost? No: there in room Sixty-

Three lay the dead man — flesh and blood — and seven blocks away, resting on a marble slab, with the water dripping continually on it, lay the other body of Henry Hobart — The Man Who Did Things Twice.

A sudden doubt came into the mind of Doctor Thiel, a misgiving that frightened him. Was that other body — that autopsy-marred body — still resting quietly on its slab at the morgue? Or —

Hastily quitting the hotel, he hurried towards the morgue, and suddenly came up against an insurmountable blank wall of mystery. The morgue was a heap of charred ruin and smoldering, steaming ashes, and *if* the autopsy-marred body of Henry Hobart had been lying on its slab during the period of the fire, then it had been totally consumed, and that other body up at the hotel was that of a second Henry Hobart; but, if the autopsy-marred body of Henry Hobart had *not* been lying quietly on its slab during the raging of the fire, then, in God's name, who and what was he who had died up at the Sumner House that morning?



By the Hands of His Friends.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



WAS living in Pima County, Arizona, in 1885. Joe Hillard was living there then. He is dead now, poor fellow, and only God and three fools know how he died. I was one of the three fools — perhaps the least guilty — certainly not blameless.

Everybody liked Hillard. He was a handsome, athletic fellow, wearing his hair long and flowing, in ideal cowboy fashion, brave and kind-hearted, brainy as any two men I have ever known, with a memory whose power was but little short of prodigious. He came originally from New Hampshire, I believe, but his personal history antecedent to 1881 was veiled in mystery. He himself never spoke of his youth, and no one in Arizona seemed to know anything about him prior to the summer he arrived in the Territory, nor to this day can I more than conjecture why he should have come out to a new land like Arizona — brilliant fellow that he was — and have spent his time roughing it in the hills, instead of remaining at home and cultivating his remarkable talents. And as for that conjecture, I leave it to the reader to discover.

In March, '82, in partnership with Hillard and four other men — all good prospectors and courageous fellows — I opened up a mine in the hills north-east of Tucson. We had no stamps — only two arrastres — but the ore was rich, and we were making the ground pay, when one night the Apaches came along and stole our burros, leaving us without any power with which to crush the ore, and crippling us entirely as far as quartz mining went.

We believed that the little band of Apaches was led by a white renegade, the most villainous being that had ever dragged a helpless captive over the cactus spikes at the heels of an infuriated mustang, and the night after Tom Hazen was shot through the

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

back of the head, as he came walking quietly into camp, we hid our provisions in a rendezvous in the hills, and set about making preparations to exterminate our enemies. We proposed to kill the Apaches like reptiles, but we would hang their white leader like a murderer.

We had never seen this renegade. No white man in Arizona had ever seen him face to face, save the dead that lay out on the hot alkali-lands, or up in the hills, with their sealed lips baked by the sun or eaten away by ants. Yet, though he seemed as invisible as the Angel of Death, he was a terrible reality. He was the moving spirit behind "Apache Kid," when that noted Indian was striking like a rattlesnake through all Arizona, and many an ash-heap no bigger than a mole-hill cried out to heaven for vengeance upon him — ash-heaps that once were human beings!

The friendly Pima Indians, to whom were due all knowledge of this white renegade, had reported that his face was ghastly white, despite the fact that for years he had lived under the open sky in one of the hottest climates of the West, and that his features, while not ugly, were cruel as death.

We proposed to make of ourselves a party of vengeance, take this man prisoner, and execute him. Hillard was made our leader, for he was the best man amongst us, and we all knew it. We were alike courageous, but Hillard was infinitely shrewd in his bravery; we were all physically powerful, but Hillard handled his strength like a trained athlete.

In three days we had run to earth two of the Apaches, and killed them. I lost the little finger of my right hand in that affair.

This taste of retribution was so encouraging that Hillard, with something of his old-time spirit, made a jest about his hair. I have once before spoken of Hillard's hair. It was long and exceedingly luxurious, falling about his shoulders, straight down over his ears, in great profusion. He doubly tempted death to go among the Apaches with such an adornment, those red devils coveting his scalp from the first, yet nothing could prevail upon him to cut his hair short, or even to trim it down a little, and I believed in those days that he was proud of it as an addition to his personal beauty, which was very considerable; but, God help me, I know better now!

On the fifth morning after we had taken to our rendezvous — I think it was a Saturday — Dick Montrose went off at about eleven o'clock, intending to search a little ravine which, up to that time, had received no attention, for it seemed not likely that an enemy would conceal himself in such an exposed place. And, besides, the Apaches — in fact, all Indians — when man-hunting or being man-hunted, take to the highest places, the hills and the bluffs, endeavoring to look down upon the enemy, and thus have him at a great disadvantage.

Dick had promised to return within a couple of hours, but when twice that length of time had elapsed without our friend reappearing, we began to grow a bit worried. Hillard all the while had been pacing up and down uneasily, and a little later he suddenly put his hand to his head and exclaimed with deep emotion: "My God, I can see Dick sitting down somewhere, looking at me!"

I got up without a word and followed Hillard as he led the way, rifle in hand, over the path that our companion had lately taken. In about fifteen minutes we reached the west side of the ravine. Here we paused and carefully scanned the basin, but saw nothing of our friend. Then Hillard called my attention to something upon the east side of the cañon and about on a level with our eyes. From the distance it looked like the figure of a man.

It took us some twenty minutes to reach that east side of the cañon, and come up to the object which lately had caught our eyes. It was Dick, sitting on a rock, smiling.

"Well, Dick," I asked, "what luck?"

There was no reply, and, as I took a step nearer to Montrose, a shock of horror struck me like the discharge from a powerful electric battery. For the smile upon those lips was a ghastly illusion. Dick Montrose was dead!

We took the body back to camp — Hillard and I — and there gave it humane burial. Hillard, poor fellow, being of a nervous, intuitive temperament, was profoundly affected by our friend's murder, and I watched him closely, realizing that he was in danger of losing control of his reason.

Late that night I fell off into an uneasy sleep, to awaken in less than an hour from wretched dreams.

Reaching over my hand, I felt for Hillard, who always slept next to me. He was gone! Immediately I arose and looked about the camp for him, but he was nowhere to be found. I aroused my two companions, but the night was so dark we had to await the coming of day before beginning search.

At about five o'clock we found Hillard's footprints leading over a small alkali-flat to the north. The footprints led directly on for about two hundred yards, where, suddenly, in the center of the open flat, they turned about and pointed towards us. Hillard, from that point, had walked on *backwards*!

Yes, the poor fellow must have lost his reason entirely thenceforth to have gone backwards in walking, and there was something uncanny in following these strange footprints, heightened by the uncertainty of what we should find at their end.

Vainly endeavoring to silence our fears, we hastened on, and for another two hundred yards followed the scarcely perceptible footprints, to come flush at last with the opening of a small cave.

As no footprints led from this chamber, we judged that poor Hillard was still within its shelter, and we were about to enter and make search for him, when we were arrested by a sound, and driven to conceal ourselves behind a large boulder, from one side of which we could command a view of the cave, yet remain hidden.

Some one within the cleft was laughing. It was the laughter either of a madman or a fiend, and we waited and watched with chilled blood. In another moment a face appeared at the opening of the cave and looked about. It was ghastly white—such a face as might belong to a being whom the sun's rays had never touched; colorless as the white growth of a plant that one finds hidden beneath a board in a damp place out of the sun's reach. The eyes were like those of a new-born animal, without lashes, pale, weak, and ineffectual.

"Look!" I whispered to my companions. "It's the renegade leader of the Apaches!"

Stealthily the man came from the cave and made directly towards us, his feet twisted about until his toes pointed sideways from his body. As he came around the boulder which concealed us from view, we leapt forward and grappled him fast. Hobart had brought along his lariat, and this he wound about our prison-

er's body, pinioning his arms to his side, while I restrained the man from crying out by firmly grasping his throat. He made no struggle — only looked at us with his horrible eyes.

"Are you that devil," Hobart questioned, "who killed two of our camp?"

As the creature nodded and laughed, I believe I should have shot him on the spot had I not suddenly noticed that he was dressed in poor Hillard's clothes. I called the attention of my companions to this fact, and we instantly came to the conclusion that Hillard, too, had been made away with.

Leaving Hobart on guard, Rabe and I cautiously entered the cave. There we found Hillard's silver watch lying in the dirt!

Returning, we asked our prisoner whether he was the white man who had led the Apaches to repeated massacre of the settlers. He nodded and laughed. We asked him if he had murdered Hillard, whose clothing he wore. He nodded and laughed. We asked him if he were the devil himself. He nodded and laughed.

Were we in a trap? Had the renegade surrendered himself that his Apache followers might close about us unperceived, while our attention was distracted by a prisoner, and murder what remained of our little band? I looked down at the twisted, ghastly being lying upon the ground before me, his long hair matted about his ears and shoulders; then came Hobart's stern command.

Hang him!

Hang him! It was Rabe speaking.

"No," I said. "Not until we find Hillard's body."

Our prisoner laughed softly; as he did so, showing his teeth, which were chalky white, and as brittle as if never used.

"This thing," said Hobart, spurning with his foot the form on the ground, "is either a madman who in his saner moments leads the Apaches to massacres, or he is the devil himself." Then he addressed the prisoner: "You have the clothes of one of our party upon you. That man is missing. Now, either direct us to him, or explain how you came by his property — or else you die!"

We waited that the renegade might speak, but he only nodded his head and laughed.

Tom Hazen had been shot dead from behind; Dick Montrose had been murdered and mutilated; and now poor Hillard was

missing. I thought of these things, and as Hobart and Rabe began dragging the prisoner to a near-by tree, I remained silent.

A few minutes later and the man was paying for his evident crimes with his life. My companions had taken the matter into their own hands, and I turned my face away.

Yet still I questioned myself, Were we in some kind of a trap? And as I went with my friends from that ghastly swinging thing, a dreadful feeling of impending evil came over me.

Again we searched the cave for poor Hillard, or his body, but found only his knife, lying near where we had found his watch. Giving over further search of the place, we came out and looked at the burden of the mesquit.

A wind had come up, and the body, though dead, swayed to and fro and twisted about on the lariat, and as we looked — sickened by the sight, though our act had seemed one of justice — the long, matted hair of the dead man — hair strangely like Hillard's — suddenly slipped from the head that it covered and fell to the ground beneath, and slowly that late ghastly-white face of the dead man began turning out of our view, as the head and body were turned about by the wind, and silently, awfully — O God ! shall I never forget it ? — the face of poor Hillard came into our vision — black, strangled, horrible, looking down upon us from the head of that being whom we had hanged !

Poor, unhappy Hillard ! Like Janus, he had been born with two faces : one in the front of his head — the face of a brave, intellectual man — the face we had long known ; another in the back of his head, which, concealed throughout his life by a heavy covering of false hair, had become colorless, ghastly, unhuman.

Shocked by Dick's death, he had wandered away from camp, and while mentally unbalanced, had removed his false hair and concealed from us the face we knew so well, exposing in its stead what we took to be the face of the renegade leader of the Apaches.

Thus by the hands of his friends died Joseph Hillard : thus horribly !



The New Minister.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



JUDITH QUIMBY, spinster, was a thorn in the side of the body-social of Watervale, for Judith Quimby, spinster, owned the only church in that little village — she had inherited the edifice from her father, who had got it by foreclosure — and being the proprietor of the church-building she had taken it upon herself to dictate the views of the clergy who should hold forth from its pulpit.

Judith Quimby, spinster, was a Baptist, and so also were the divines engaged to wake spiritual thunder in the pulpit of her church. Watervale likewise was Baptist, *but* Judith Quimby's eagle nose was a sensitive spiritual thermometer, which she thrust into the depths of each of her clergyman's wells of faith, and if that thermometer registered the slightest variation of a degree from the temperature of her own wells of faith, then Judith Quimby, spinster, arose, accused the unhappy clergyman of heresy, showed him to the door of her favor, and drove him forth peremptorily. In a year she had dismissed four men of God.

It would seem that the good people of Watervale might have taken into their own hands their spiritual peace and welfare, engaged that particular divine who most pleased them, and have set him to preaching from an improvised pulpit in a barn, if need be; but ah! what is an ordained minister, what even a religion, without a spired, cupolaed church? No! their clergyman must preach from a regular pulpit in a regular church edifice, and Watervale being too needy to erect a house of worship of its own, needs suffer all the inconvenience and vexation visited upon it by the eccentricities of the owner of the one church in the village — Judith Quimby, spinster.

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

The month of August, embracing five Sundays, passed, and during this no inconsiderable period Watervale remained wholly without public religious edification, whereat the villagers began to murmur, but Judith Quimby set her thin lips and stood firm. The Lord, in good time, would send a minister of true orthodoxy, she assured her townspeople, and better that He should forget their needs than that the village should be corrupted by heresy. Better no prophet than a false one.

The first week in September came and went, and it began to look as if Miss Quimby herself would have to fill her empty pulpit, when her deacon, Timothy Watts, Esq., received a letter bearing the postmark of a city in Michigan.

Breaking the envelope, he perused the following amazing communication :

MR. TIMOTHY WATTS, Watervale.

Reverend Sir:—

Learning that you are the deacon of the Baptist Church of Watervale, we take the liberty of introducing ourselves to you.

We are known as The Clergyman, Church and Choir Supply Company, and are incorporated under the laws of the State of Michigan. We are prepared to supply the public with clergymen of every denomination, and all shades of the same. Our correspondent has informed us that your village is at present in need of a Baptist clergyman. May we have your permission to submit samples? It will cost you nothing for examination, and our terms for the goods, delivered, will be as follows: One hundred dollars a year, payable quarterly in advance.

The clergyman chosen by your constituency will preach one timely, original sermon each week, with opening prayer and benediction, and be kept in working order at our expense.

Only fine-looking clergymen in stock, and we call particular attention to the fact that all sermons can be examined before delivery, and edited to suit the tastes of the congregation.

We furnish choirs, too, in all languages and at the most reasonable prices.

We also are prepared to furnish portable or non-portable churches, at the shortest notice.

All religions constantly in stock, and new forms and rituals constantly added.

In case you should wish to consider our proposition further, we will be pleased to mail you our handsome illustrated catalogue, or, better still, have our agent call in person upon you.

Trusting to receive an early order, and guaranteeing you the highest satisfaction,

We subscribe ourselves,

THE CLERGYMAN, CHURCH, AND CHOIR SUPPLY COMPANY.

“Well, I swan,” exclaimed Deacon Watts, removing his glasses and rubbing the indentation that they had made in the bridge of his nose; “this beats me!”

Again the man of peace perused the typewritten communication, then, folding it carefully, placed it in his pocket and went over to Judith Quimby, spinster, for further light.

Two hours later Deacon Watts posted a letter directed to The Clergyman, Church and Choir Supply Company. Judith Quimby had commanded that unique company to send down an agent to Watervale with samples of Baptist clergymen and the terms for a choir of two male and two female voices: "For while we are about it, deacon," snapped Miss Judith, "we might as well see if we can get a choir that can praise the Lord, without scratching each others' eyes out at the same time!"

The following Tuesday an agent of the C. C. and C. S. Co. arrived and with the aid of her deacon, Judith Quimby finally arranged with him for a clergyman and a choir of four voices which she thought would prove quite satisfactory. She then posted a notice to the effect that her church would open on the following Sunday, with clergyman and choir engaged at her own expense, and invited every one to attend.

Sunday came, and with it came the congregation to listen to the new clergyman and the new choir. What manner of man would the former be? And the choir? Really, Judith Quimby must be at ruinous expense to bear the whole cost out of her private means.

At precisely ten o'clock Deacon Watts stepped forward and opened the door leading from the vestibule to the church, and the congregation entered the house of worship. The new clergyman and the choir were there before them, the divine standing in his pulpit, the choir seated on his right.

A murmur of surprise and pleasure broken from the congregation. What a noble clergyman! young, handsome, saintly; everything a pastor should be! And the choir — what a fine-looking group! One could almost see their perfect voices in their intelligent, spiritual faces.

The congregation was now seated and, lifting his outstretched hands, the new clergyman opened the morning's worship with prayer and then immediately chose his text and delivered his sermon. The little flock held its breath in admiration: never before had it heard such a sermon as this — a masterly searching

out of the vanities of these latter times, delivered in a rich, sonorous voice, and with true Baptist fervency. Verily, a summer of spiritual glory had descended upon the village of Watervale!

"The choir will now sing the forty-seventh hymn," directed the new clergyman, and at once the choir arose with open hymn-books and, taking the most graceful attitude, rendered the song in consummate style; then, decently, soberly, Christianly, without staring at face or bonnet among the congregation, sat down.

Judith Quimby was triumphant—her townspeople elated, amazed, curious.

The new clergyman now arose and, speaking in a more familiar tone than heretofore, introduced himself to his flock as the Reverend Richard Bonifield, and trusted that only the highest esteem and affection would ever exist between himself and his congregation. Then, lifting his hands, he spoke the benediction, and immediately afterwards the congregation arose and made its exit to the vocal music of the choir.

In the vestibule Judith Quimby was instantly surrounded, to be congratulated by every one upon her choice of a new clergyman, and thanked for her noble services and, with a questioning inflection, her great expense. Miss Judith bowed condescendingly, but still her townspeople lingered.

"Really, dear," burst out little Mrs. Pinchin, dying with curiosity, "but we cannot go until we have shaken hands with the new minister, and thanked the choir for their beautiful singing."

Judith Quimby swept out her arms, making a little open space, the better to address her audience, and began: "It is impossible, friends, that you meet the new minister or thank the choir. Impossible! I repeat. The Reverend Richard Bonifield, and his charming choir, are not frail flesh and blood, as we are; they see not as we see, hear not as we hear, feel not as we feel; your flatteries cannot touch them, nor your heresies corrupt; they are above the follies and illusions of this little world. In fact, my friends, you have to-day listened to a sermon and to religious singing rendered by servants of a new and incorruptible church. At last have Christian souls found the perfect choir and the perfect minister! The Reverend Richard Bonifield and his choir are not men and women, but steel and wax figures—worked by our

deacon — and within each of these figures is a phonograph, the records of which have been and will in the future be edited by me, so that hereafter we shall have the true faith delivered in the true way. Friends, I wish you a very good morning this blessed Sabbath day, and I assure you that you will always be welcome to this incorruptible church which I have established in your midst. One word more — hereafter there will be no collection, except that for foreign missions.



Eggs, \$12,000 Per Dozen.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



ASTUS JOHNSON, colored, was the pride and solicitude of the little village of New Canaan, Connecticut. The Baptists stood willing to immerse him, the Methodists were eager to sprinkle him, the Episcopalians hoped sooner or later to receive him into the fold, while the Congregationalists would have been proud to have pointed to him as a disciple who shunned the primrose path of dalliance and walked in the strait and narrow way. And since his skin had grown a shade lighter he was claimed by the Christian Scientists, for Rastus had prayed to become as his white brethren and, such is the power of mind over matter, his cuticle had suffered a change. But this latter happy state may have been due to a more frequent application of soap and water.

Then the day came when Rastus was able to read. A good lady of the village had taught him his letters, and when at last he applied that knowledge so advantageously as to peruse the *New Canaan Chronicle*, the first copy of which — warm from the press — always fell to him as a mark of special honor, the village all but arose and set the town bells a-ringing in celebration of the joyous occasion.

But alas! with knowledge comes sorrow, as the psalmist says, and this ability to read proved the undoing of Rastus. It was three o'clock on a Saturday afternoon when the old colored man suddenly stared at a particular paragraph in the paper which he had to that moment been leisurely and proudly perusing, then, letting the paper fall to the floor of the country store where he was seated, he began to groan, his black and erstwhile saintly physiognomy depicting the utmost pain and alarm.

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

The bystanders hurried to his assistance and did everything in their power to relieve him, but Rastus was not to be comforted.

"Oh, good Lawd, de chicken, de chicken!" groaned the sufferer.

"Where is the pain; do tell?" pleaded Mrs. Samantha Baxter, who was in the store at the time buying some calico with which to make handkerchiefs for foreign mission work.

Placing his hand in the region of his stomach, Rastus again groaned, "Oh, good Lawd, de chicken, de chicken!"

Mrs. Baxter sought by every Christian means in her power to soothe the sufferer. Indeed, she went so far as to beg him to recollect that his suffering was merely an error of the mind, for mind is everything, and that he could overcome it by the sheer force of will, but Rastus evidently had inside information contrary to that doctrine, and kept rubbing his stomach and groaning, "De chicken, de chicken!"

"What chicken, Mr. Johnson? Speak, poor soul!"

"De Thurston chicken! Oh, de good Lawd!"

"I knew it!" cried Mrs. Baxter. "Some wretch has poisoned one of Mr. Thurston's chickens, and now our unhappy colored brother has eaten of the chicken and been poisoned. Some one run for Doctor Thorpe, while I call on Brother Thurston!"

Leaving the sufferer groaning and writhing, Mrs. Baxter made straight for the Thurston farm on the outskirts of the village, to return a little later with her eyes as large as saucers.

"Land sakes, what do you think?" she cried. "There's a lot of city men down there, and Thurston is holding an egg auction, and when I came away they were bidding eight hundred dollars apiece for hens' eggs!"

Instantly there was a general movement on the part of the villagers toward the Thurston farm, Old Rastus Johnson, however, insisting that he be abandoned to his misery. When they reached the farm the excitement-seekers found the amazing report of Mrs. Baxter fully corroborated by the evidence of their own eyes and ears. Thurston was disposing of hens' eggs to a group of highly excited bidders at an average price of a thousand dollars for a single egg.

Open-mouthed and dumfounded the country people stared at

this amazing proceeding, wondering what on earth the world was coming to. When, finally, the strangers took their leave, bearing with them some two dozen hens' eggs and leaving behind checks payable to Thurston of the aggregate value of twenty-four thousand dollars, Thurston turned to his expectant audience and spoke as follows:

"A California genius has given us the pitless orange and the seedless grape, the spineless cactus and the thornless rose! Then why not the boneless hen?

"Three years ago I gave up my position as a bank president in New Haven and came out here, and by gradually eliminating by painless surgery the bones of certain chickens while yet very young, and later intercrossing these chickens, I have at last succeeded in producing an egg that hatches into a boneless hen. Think of it! A breed of poultry all meat and no bone; all food, no waste; no nourishment lost in building up a useless frame of bone, but every grain of corn fed the chicken going to produce pure food stuff. Yesterday I was approached by a great financier who sought to have me form a boneless poultry trust with a capital of fifty million dollars but, being opposed to all morganizations, I have thought best to dispose of my boneless eggs to men who knew a good thing when they saw it, and have just sold to enterprising buyers the first two dozen by auction. I have now under way a boneless duck, as well as a boneless hog, which latter will control the pork markets of the world. I have just received an offer of one hundred thousand dollars for a pair of these hogs; but what is one hundred thousand dollars for an animal that will upset half the business of a great city like Chicago? I snap my fingers at the sum. In time I hope to place upon the market a boneless shad, but I shall speak now rather of what I have accomplished than of what I purpose."

Exchanging glances of profound astonishment, Mr. Thurston's auditors hurried back to the store where they had left Rastus Johnson in the doctor's charge. He was still bemoaning his affliction when the villagers returned and, in answer to renewed questioning, replied:

"Good Lawd, forgive me! Las' night I done borrowed an' eat one ob dem boneless hens what is wrote about in this yeah paper.

It could 'a' laid me a lot ob dose thousan'-dollar aigs an' made me rich!'

The cause of his sudden illness was explained! While assimilating the white man's religious teachings, he had retained his racial love for chicken, and being made aware, through a notice in the *New Canaan Chronicle*, that the particular kind of chicken which he had "borrowed" and eaten the night before was capable of laying veritable "golden eggs," he had fallen sick with grief.



The Farm that Forgot.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



PERKINS, senior, gave his suspender a hitch and stood off and looked at the barn, and his four strapping sons and the hired man joined him.

"Well, boys, it's finished at last, and it might be a bit bigger and a bit more ornamental, but, as it is, I'm satisfied, and I hope you all are."

Perkins' four sons stolidly spat upon the ground, and continued to meditate on the new barn. It seemed they had no fault to find with the building.

"It's plenty good enough for an op'ra house," affirmed the hired man, sidling forward. "A coat o' green paint now, or a kind o' slate, if it takes you that way —"

"We'll paint it when the hay's in," said Perkins, senior. "Yes, sir, we'll paint it when the hay's in."

The hired man spat copiously. "An' th' hay, ye'll begin harvestin' to-morrow?"

Perkins, senior, gazed off at the three hundred acres of grain waving in the warm June sun, and shifted his quid thoughtfully. "Well, boys, what do you all say to begin harvestin' to-morrow?"

"Jest as you say, dad; jest as you say."

Perkins, senior, took off his hat and mopped his head with a large Martha Washington. "We'll begin harvestin' in the mornin'," he said.

It was so settled, and, understanding by tacit agreement that he should remain with the Perkinses at least until the harvesting was over, the hired man left the group and went into the little two-room dwelling house, which stood about two hundred feet from the new barn, and began to prepare the evening meal.

A month before he had dropped in at the Perkins place, and

* Copyright, 1905, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

* Copyright secured in Great Britain.

* The writer of this story received a cash prize of \$300 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

had been hired for five dollars a week and found, to turn his hand to anything about the farm that he was put at, and the next day, after getting the morning meal, he had been called out to help on the barn that was then in the first stage of erection.

The barn was now finished — the door having been set upon its rollers that very afternoon — and harvesting coming on, he had been retained to help in the field. He filled the coffee-pot, fried some bacon, warmed over a batch of biscuits, and then called the men in to supper.

As yet, life on the Perkins homestead was primitive. The dwelling house consisted of two rooms, unfurnished, save for a home-made table and several rudely improvised chairs, and the farm could boast of no other stock than the work horses, which were stabled in a rude shack that stood close to the new barn, and there were no trees, vines, or vegetables anywhere on the place. Perkins, senior, and his sons had bought the property scarcely two months before — three hundred odd acres sowed to grain — and as yet they had not got their farm legs. But, all in due time, they would set out fruit trees, plant vegetables, raise chickens, and put everything in apple-pie order.

"Beats all hollow what a difference a good barn makes on a farm," remarked Perkins, senior, gazing through the open door at the new barn.

"You're right there, dad," agreed his son Ike. "An' I reck'n that barn's as good as any in twenty miles hereabout. What do you say, Si?"

The hired man put down his coffee dipper and wiped his stubbly chin. "That barn," he said, "is the best in forty miles here around."

"Well, you ought to know," nodded Ike. "You were raised in these parts, but dad and we boys haven't had time to look around since we bought the place."

"Time enough for that when the hay's in," advised Perkins, senior.

"That's it!" agreed the hired man, warmly. "When the harvestin' 's over you-all can look around a bit and see what a fine country this here is."

Supper through, Perkins, senior, and his four sons went out to

install the horses in the new barn and have another good look at the building, and Si, the hired man, joined them after he had washed the scanty kitchen utensils.

It was June — a warm, dryish June — and the twilight lingered long in the heavens, as if it, too, took an interest in the new barn, and the men did not get to bed until what to them, accustomed as they had been to retiring early after a hard day's work, was a rather late hour. Before they turned in, Perkins, senior, brought out a large jug of applejack, saved for the occasion, and he and his sons joined in numerous toasts to good luck to the farm, and good luck in particular to the new barn. Si, the hired man, refused to touch the applejack, notwithstanding he was assured that it was a purely temperance drink.

"No," he said, heroically waving the delicious beverage aside; "I used to be a hard drinker, and the very sight of a jug is enough to put me back a step on the downward road to perdition."

With one last, lingering, satisfied look at the new barn the sleepy men retired to their respective beds upon the floor, leaving the door open, as the season was very warm, and soon night spread her mantle over the scene and hushed all sounds, it seemed, save the heavy snoring of the sleepers.

Si, the hired man, was the first to awaken on the following morning. He yawned, rubbed his eyes, rolled about a bit in his blanket, wishing he had had more sleep. Then, from a sitting posture he got to his feet. His getting up, awoke Perkins, senior, and his son Ike, and they, too, proceeded to roll out of their blankets.

Si had drawn on his socks and one boot, and was in the act of drawing on his other boot, when Perkins, senior, and his son Ike saw a change come over his face so astonishing that it brought them to their feet, and awoke the others from their dreams.

The hired man was staring through the open door, and the expression on his homely face was one of more than utter amazement — his features bespoke actual horror.

The eyes of Perkins, senior, followed those of his farm-hand, and in another instant he gave a shout and rushed to the open door and stared out. He was clothed in only his shirt, yet that did not deter him from stepping through the doorway into the open. At his back crowded his four sons and the hired man, and

all looked in the direction where the barn had stood the evening before. *The barn was gone!*

A full minute and no word escaped the lips of the spellbound men; then Perkins, senior, turned upon his son Ike and shouted, "Where's the barn?"

Ike passed the question on to his brother Tim, Tim passed it on to Hiram, Hiram to Joe, and Joe demanded of the hired man, "Where's the barn?"

The hired man began to shake as with the ague. "It's gone," he gasped.

"It's blown away!" shouted Perkins, senior.

"There wasn't any wind — how could it?"

"Look a'there!" The hired man pointed at a great pile of lumber to the immediate right of where the barn had stood the evening before. The others had not noticed this, so great was their amazement at the mysterious disappearance of the barn; but now they rushed forward to where the lumber was stacked.

"By the great horn-spoon devil," shouted Perkins, senior, "some infernal rascal has taken the barn down and stacked the lumber!" His hand leapt to where his hip pocket would have been had he had on his overalls, but as those useful articles did not adorn his person, his hand slid impotently off his shirt tail.

Si, the hired man, gazing at the lumber, whispered in a tense tone: "Look a'here; this bean't the same lumber! It's new lumber! There's never a nail been driven in a plank of it!"

Perkins, senior, and his four sons gathered closer about the lumber and examined it. True to their hired man's assertion, the planking and beams were just as unloaded from the mill; not the sign of a nail-hole could be found in a stick of the mysterious stuff, nor had it ever been touched by a carpenter's saw. It was the rough lumber, as yet unfitted to its place in a building.

The men gazed at the lumber, then off at the grain waving in the warm June sunshine, and then at the familiar-looking little two-room dwelling house and the shack to the right, through the broad cracks of which they could see their horses regarding them hungrily. Then they stared at one another.

"It's a dream!" gasped Perkins, senior.

"No, it ain't no dream," said Si, the hired man. "But I'll tell you what was a dream."

"What?"

"We dreamt that we built that there new barn. This here is the lumber you got to build it with, but we never built it."

Perkins, senior, looked at his son Ike, and noticing for the first time that that strapping young fellow had nothing upon his person but a short undershirt, commanded: "Go get your clothes on and don't be a fool!"

"Get your own clothes on," retorted Ike.

"I've got 'em on, you whipsnap!" thundered the irate senior. Then he discovered that he had nothing on but his shirt.

Perkins, senior, stuck out his thumb, on the end of which was a large blood blister, and demanded: "If we never built that barn, where'd I mash my thumb?"

The hired man stared at the blood blister, then shook his head stubbornly, saying: "If we built that there barn, where's the barn?"

This question proved to be a poser, the very jumping-off place of their knowledge, and his four sons looked at Perkins, senior, and echoed, "Yes, dad, where's the barn?"

Perkins, senior, gazed overhead, as if he half expected the barn to come flying back to earth on the magic carpet of Bagdad; then he gazed at the place where the barn should have stood, then at the pile of lumber without a nail-hole in so much as one stick of it. Then he made answer:

"Either we all are dum mad, or else this consarned farm has gone crazy and forgot it ever had a barn on it."

The men went to the shack and led forth the horses; nothing was the matter with them. They hurried into the lower end of the shack and examined the big harvester; it was just as they had left it the evening before. They returned to where the barn had stood — or where it seemed to have stood — and examined the ground. There were the holes that had been dug for the foundation beams, but that was all.

Again they looked off at the grain waving in the warm June sun; not a stalk of it seemed changed. And the little dwelling house stood just as it had the evening before. And the little creek

ran down across the farm, as it had the evening before, and the same familiar sky was overhead.

Had the farm actually forgot that there was ever a barn on it, as Perkins, senior, strangely asserted — or had something more amazing occurred during the night?

All day the men wandered about the place, seeking for the lost barn, or some explanation of its mysterious disappearance. In vain. The ground where the building had stood was too solid to have permitted the timbers to have sunk into the earth, and by what means could they have been lifted into the air and been borne from sight? By the agency of a cyclone? Impossible! A cyclone would have left some track of its progress, and no such track was anywhere to be found. And then — strangest of all — there was that pile of lumber without a nail-hole in so much as a stick of it — untouched by a carpenter's saw.

That evening, at the supper table, Si, the hired man, arose and said: "Here we are — six hearty men, what believe we've had practice at such a thing, and there's the lumber out there all ready for hammer an' saw. Now I want to take a vote an' see if we ain't a-going to build that there barn again and build it to stay built."

Perkins, senior, brought his fist down with a bang that made the coffee jump out of the pot. "An' by the great horn-spoon devil, when it's built a second time, I'm goin' to watch it with a shotgun!"

The next morning they began to build a second barn where the first had stood — or where they believed it to have stood — and work progressed rapidly, as all the materials were conveniently at hand. Si, the hired man, worked at the building, lovingly, faithfully; Perkins, senior, and his four sons, faithfully, if not lovingly; and at the end of thirty days the barn was finished and its doors hung. This second barn was a duplicate of the first.

That night the men took turns watching the building with a shotgun, loaded to the muzzle with buckshot; but nothing unusual occurred. Elated, they began the next day to harvest the grain, always keeping a watchful eye on the barn. The year had been rather dry and, fearing the crop would not ripen well, they had decided to make it to hay. After the harvested grain had dried on the ground for a couple of days, they gathered the greater part

of it into the barn, until the large building was filled almost to bursting with the strawy stuff.

At supper, Perkins, senior, said: "I'm thinkin' o' goin' into town to-morrow, an' gettin' a lot o' hens, an' some pigs, an' a cow or two. I ain't ever been to town since I bought this farm, an' I'm runnin' short on tobacco, too. One of you boys can come along, but you other three and Si had better stay and watch the barn."

"I'm a-thinkin' o' gettin' work up in the mountains," spoke up the hired man. "I'm most like to get the hay fever down here in August. I was thinkin' o' pullin' out in the mornin'."

"Well, Si, we'll miss you right smart," said Perkins, senior. "You've come in as handy here as a stub-handle ax."

"An' I'll miss you all," answered Si. "I don't reck'lect that I ever worked for a family what has been kinder to me than you and the boys. I'll always remember you."

Si went out and brought in a pail of water from the spring and, setting it down on the table with a flourish, remarked: "Mighty warm to-night! A man could drink a barrel o' water, 'specially after eatin' bacon for supper."

And so it seemed, for Perkins, senior, and his sons emptied the pail in a trice. Then they turned in and soon all were sound asleep, save Si, who tossed uneasily in his corner.

The next morning, Perkins, senior, was the first to turn out, and as soon as he had dressed himself he stepped out-of-doors as usual to see whether the barn was still standing. It was, and he was about to go down to the creek to draw a pail of water when something all but lifted him from his boots. Immediately he began to shout loudly, and soon his sons were aroused and came running to his side, demanding what was wrong. However, once without the door, they needed only their own eyes to inform them. Instead of a great stubble field of three hundred acres, as it had been the evening before, the land about the farmhouse was a waving field of grain, with the July sun shining upon it.

Perkins, senior, and his four sons whitened visibly beneath their tan, and Si, the hired man, who stood a little behind, shook like a man with the Arkansas ague.

"Quick! To the barn!" shouted Perkins, senior, breaking away. Reaching the barn, he threw wide open the doors; then

fell back as before an apparition. The barn, but the evening before stuffed with hay to bursting, was empty !

"God a-mighty ! the hay has got out o' the barn an' stuck itself on to the stubble !"

"It's another crop, dad," cried Ike, struggling with the mystery as breathlessly as with a corporeal foe. "It's another crop grow'd up in a night !"

"But the barn's empty !"

Shaking as with fear, Si, the hired man, approached. "We never harvested that hay," he whispered, hoarsely. "We only dreamed it."

Perkins, senior, struck the ground with his boot, then knelt down and felt it with his hand. "Is this land ? tell me, one o' you ; or is it a crazy hole in nature, and when you build a barn it vanishes in a night, and when you harvest the hay it goes and sticks itself back on the stubble ?"

"It's our farm," said Hiram, in an awed tone. "There's the house ; and there's the shed ; and over there's the creek ; and there's the tree I cut down ; and here's the barn ; and look a'there, God a-mighty ! there's the oil-can that I threw away when we first came here. It's got your name on the side, dad."

He picked up the can, and on the paper label could plainly be distinguished the penciled name "I. Perkins."

"It's the devil's own farm !" spoke up Si, the hired man ; "that's what it is ! Where time turns back ev'ry once in a while, an' what you do one month is undid the next. What's the use o' living on such a place ? If you plant trees, when they're old enough to bear they'll take a streak and grow into th' ground ; and when th' chickens are big enough to eat, you'll see them turnin' into yeller peepers an' creepin' back into their shells."

No sooner had the men retired to the farmhouse than Si got out his stick and began assembling his few possessions, which consisted chiefly of home-grown tobacco.

"Where be you goin', Si ?" demanded Perkins, senior.

"I'm a-goin' to hit th' hill ; that's where I'm goin'. You don't catch me workin' on a farm any longer what won't stay farmed."

"I don't blame you a bit," said Perkins, senior, "and if I warn't tied up with the property, I'd clear out myself, with the

boys. Wait a bit, and we'll hitch up and drive you into town."

Breakfast over, the six men drove away in the farm-wagon towards the little village of Lockwood, eighteen miles to the north, and there Si, the hired man, after a solemn exchange of a chew apiece of store tobacco, took his leave of the Perkinses.

That evening when Perkins, senior, and his four sons returned to the farm, they returned as temporary owners merely. During the day they had paid the village real estate agent a visit and exchanged "the farm that forgot" for a farm twenty miles farther to the north. A week later the Perkinses, bag and baggage, left the mysterious farm for good and went to live upon their new place which, when farmed, stayed "farmed."

The following December, Perkins, senior, received the following remarkable epistle bearing the Lockwood postmark:

I purkens esq & suns
dear sirs & frends

I got to tell U awl sumthing or dye laffin I wood have ritten U awl before but i wanted to get out of this country first for feer U ol fools wood raze a rumpus yure farm up here was awl right it was a jim dandy farm I know it was kause i got the *twin* farm to it an i just sold it for 3 thousand dolars spot gold It is about 5 miles dew west of yure ol place an it is so like it in ever way that the tacks colector thinks both farms ar the same one an i never had to pay any tacks on mine its got a 2 rume house on it an a streem of watter runin thurgh it an the same kind of trees an hills an everthing else round it so it is just like yure ol farm as one twin gal is like anuther well when U fokes bought yure farm and started to build a barn i cum down an hired miself to U awl an when the barn was thurgh that night i got U awl doped by drinkin opum out of the aple jack an that night i put U awl in a waggon with yure chairs an tabble an packed U awl over to my place an when U awl woke up in the morning an thought U awl were at home on yure place i almost died laffin to see U awl starin at where U awl thought the barn aught to be then i got U awl to bild a fine an jim dandy barn on my place out of the lumber i had awl reddy piled up an after that cut my crop of wheet which i hadent munney enough to hired cut then when it waz awl cut an in the barn i doped U awl agen in watter an took U awl back to yure own farm an of korse yure wheet hadent bin cut yet an U awl thought it had got out of the barn an grew up agen an i hurt my ribs to this day a laffin up my sleeve U got a good hart but ar a dum ol fool yure suns ar dito i never had a barn bilt so chepe before an if yure suns ever have twins U beter tie a diferent cullured ribon round them so one of them wont get the other fellers pye as i got yure wurk I am going to nue york an i wont see U awl agen but i wish i kood see U awl when U awl see this

yure frien

sl the hired man

When Perkins, senior, and his four sons had puzzled out the above document and then realized how they had been duped by a trick of nature, abetted by a shrewd fellow-farmer, they felt like — well, like going out and kicking a hired man.





A Hint From Santa Claus



The Kindergarten
Size, 8 x 10½ inches

LOOK high, low, anywhere and everywhere, you won't find for young and old a more enjoyable or suitable Holiday Gift than the Collection of *Black Cat* Drawings by Nelly Littlehale Umbstaetter just out. No one who has not seen this fascinating array of more than 150 unique creations—Pictures, Tailpieces and Alphabets—can form an idea of its appropriateness for

The Cozy Corner
The Nursery
The School Room

The Club Room
The Den
The Home

While specially suited for framing—they are eight by ten and one-half inches—these pictures appeal alike to old and young in



Copyright, 1905, The Shortstory Publishing Company



the scrap book and portfolio, lend themselves to many decorative purposes, and are a happy thought for Card Party Prizes.



Butterfly
8 x 10½ inches

This collection was specially designed by the artist of *The Black Cat* as a Souvenir of the Magazine's Tenth Anniversary, and the 1905 edition will be delivered to readers for the nominal price of \$1.00 per set, if ordered before December 31st.



"Hero"
8 x 10½ inches

A Great Holiday Offer



Chet
8 x 10½ inches

We will deliver a set **FREE** to any one who will send us three subscriptions to *The Black Cat* for one year, or one subscription for three years with \$1.50 to pay therefor.



We Are One
8 x 10½ inches

As the pictures may be sent to one address and the subscriptions to others, a dollar and a half will carry a most delightful All-the-Year-



Minstrel
8 x 10½ inches

Round Treat into four homes. During 1906 everyone will want to read the great \$12,000 prize stories in *The Black Cat*, which publishes the most captivating tales in the world and costs but 50 cts. a year. By loaning your copy to neighbors you can readily induce them to



Good Night
8 x 10½ inches

subscribe and secure for yourself the collection of Souvenir Drawings free of cost. The Shortstory Pub. Co., Boston, Mass.



The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1906, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vol. XI., No. 5.
Whole No., 125.

FEBRUARY, 1906.

5 cents a copy.
50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories—every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION.—*The entire contents of THE BLACK CAT are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

The Mystification of Wentworth.*

BY FRANK X. FINNEGAN.



RALPH WENTWORTH, young, handsome, twenty-six, sat in his bachelor apartments staring in amazement at a letter he had just opened and at the check which had dropped from the envelope. With puzzled brow he looked from one to the other, but there was nothing there to enlighten him. The letter was addressed in his name and to his rooms. The check was made out in his favor—both were very evidently meant for him.

But the puzzled expression of his face only deepened when he read the letter through a second time:

OFFICE OF THE PLANET.

Dear Sir:—We are glad to inform you that your story, entered in our prize competition that closed November 1st, has been awarded a prize of \$250, and we take pleasure in handing you herewith our check for that amount. Hoping we will be favored with other contributions from your pen, we are

Yours sincerely,

PLANET PUBLISHING COMPANY,

MR. RALPH WENTWORTH.

JERELY ADAMS, *President.*

What did it all mean? Wentworth had never written a story in his life—of that he was positive. The writing of a letter was

* Copyright, 1906, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved. The writer of this story received a cash prize of \$200 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

to him a dreaded ordeal, postponed as often as possible. He had never even heard of the *Planet* competition until he opened the letter in his hand.

Yet here it was, addressed to him, and here was the \$250 check. That, at least, was real. The Planet Publishing Company he knew to be a substantial corporation with a big bank account. The check was made out in his name on a reputable bank and was even certified, that there might be no doubt of its validity.

It looked to Wentworth at first blush as though he were two hundred and fifty ahead without any effort on his part. But the next moment he felt ashamed of the thought.

"It belongs to some other Ralph Wentworth, of course," he said to himself, "some poor fellow who forgot to enclose his address in his excitement when sending them his story, and the *Planet* people probably got my address in the directory and decided it must be me. I'll send the check back with a note of explanation."

He felt so virtuous over this renunciation of the substantial prize that had dropped into his hands so unexpectedly that he started at once to write the note to the *Planet*.

But on second thought he stopped.

"Hold on a minute, son," he said to himself, "there's no rush about it, and I've got a queer notion that there's something odd behind all this. I believe I'll go down to the *Planet* office and look into it a bit."

In ten minutes Wentworth was in the street, headed for the newspaper office and still revolving the amazing situation in his mind.

He could not reconcile the opposing features, try as he would. It seemed ridiculously simple at first glance — he had not written a story for the prize and therefore the prize could not belong to him. But why had he received it? That was the point that could not be explained offhand and before he reached the newspaper office he had decided upon a plan of action that would set all doubts at rest.

He would ask to see the manuscript of the prize story — merely through curiosity, he was forced to admit to himself. By no

process of reasoning could he bring himself to hope that his mission might result in profit to himself.

At the office of the Planet Publishing Company he was met by a suave young man, solicitous to serve him.

"I am Mr. Wentworth," said Ralph, expecting the *Planet* man to be properly impressed.

"Yes, sir," said the clerk, "what can I do for you?"

"I received this note from the *Planet* today," said Wentworth, producing the mysterious letter. The clerk read it through, and his manner changed at once.

"Delighted to meet you, Mr. Wentworth," he exclaimed, "how can we serve you?"

Wentworth grew a trifle embarrassed.

"Well, the fact is," he stammered, "if it isn't too much trouble I would like to have a look at the original manuscript of the — of my story. You see, there's a point or two about it that I have been — er — rather hazy about in my own mind, and if you could oblige me with an opportunity of — well, studying it a bit, I would consider it a great favor."

The prize winner was a bit red and disconcerted when he had stumbled through this speech, but the *Planet* man did not notice it. He was overcome by the honor of personally addressing the winner of the prize story competition concerning which he had heard and talked so much.

"Certainly, Mr. Wentworth," he said, "I have no doubt that can be arranged. If you'll be good enough to take a seat and wait a few moments I will speak to Mr. Adams."

Wentworth sat down near a window and the polite young man disappeared into an inner office. In a few moments he returned with a small packet of manuscript.

"There you are, Mr. Wentworth," he said, handing him the story, "I suppose you must think pretty highly of that."

Wentworth said nothing, but bowed his thanks and reached rather eagerly for the manuscript. Then he turned to the window, took one glance at the first page and started in disbelief of his own eyes.

It was in his handwriting.

He sat down with his back to the obliging clerk, and, with the

manuscript on his knee, looked at it again. There was no doubt of it. Either he had penned those pages or the other Ralph Wentworth carried out the duplication of personalities to the absurd length of duplicating his handwriting.

With his brain in a whirl of amazement and a rather creepy feeling in his spine telling him there was something uncanny about the affair, Ralph looked for little peculiarities he knew his handwriting possessed—the crossing of “t’s” and the making of final “d’s” and “e’s.” They were all there. Beyond the shadow of doubt he had written the story.

But how? Under what supernatural circumstances had he written a prize story—he who had never in his life written a letter more than three pages in length? How had he addressed and mailed it without the facts leaving the slightest impression on his mind?

“Well, let’s see what it’s about,” he said to himself, and with a strange feeling of unreality possessing him, quite as though he were someone else and knew it all the time, he turned to the first page of the manuscript and, under the title, “The Thing That Moved,” read as follows:

Dr. Chester slowly stirred his coffee, and remained silent so long that Holabird, sitting opposite him at the table, playfully snapped his fingers to bring him back to earth.

“Come, come, doc,” he said, “this won’t do. Wake up. What were you dreaming of? Some fair charmer of the past?” So saying he filled a tiny glass with brandy and pushed the decanter toward his companion.

With a start the doctor had roused himself from his reverie and, sighing deeply, rubbed his eyes as though he would brush away the memories that had enthralled him.

“Holabird,” he said, after a moment, “this is the anniversary of the affair that saddened my whole life, cut short my career as a physician and made me what you have found me—a purposeless, roving spendthrift without an ambition in life.”

“And what was this affair that had so disastrous a termination?” asked Holabird, lightly. He had not noted the serious tone in which the doctor spoke, and expected a jest for an answer.

“The death of my wife,” said Dr. Chester, gravely.

"Your what?" he demanded, sitting up suddenly and staring at his friend, "When did you have a wife?" He broke off suddenly when he saw the seriousness of the doctor's face, and then added:

"I beg your pardon, doctor. I am a fool. I might have known that since much of your past life is unknown to me there might have been ——"

Dr. Chester raised his hand.

"It's all right, Tom," he said, "there is no need of any apology. It is a chapter in my life that has been closed so long and at which so few of my friends have even had a glimpse that you could not be expected to know anything about it. In the circle in which I have moved for the last ten years I pass as a bachelor. I am better satisfied that it is so. It saves me the pain of making explanations. It prevents the re-opening of the old wound. When I met you a few years ago I saw no reason for making an exception of you and letting you know there had been a romance and a tragedy in my life.

"But as our acquaintance ripened and we grew closer and closer together, I have frequently been on the point of telling you the story. Tonight, the anniversary of Mildred's death, the mood is upon me again. I have thought of it all day. That was why I was so preoccupied at dinner tonight. Had I not determined to tell you the story I would not now have mentioned the subject which has been ever present in my mind for more than a decade of years."

"Whatever you say, doctor, I shall, of course, regard as a sacred confidence," said Holabird, solemnly.

"I know that, Tom," said Dr. Chester warmly, "or I would still remain silent."

He poured out a glass of brandy, tossed it off and began his story, to which Holabird listened with absorbed interest.

"When the World's Fair was at its height in Chicago," began Dr. Chester, "I came here from New York as a pleasure-seeker. I was wealthy, happy and independent. After graduation from two of the big medical schools in New York I rapidly acquired a large practice, and its returns, together with my private fortune, made my lot envied by the struggling young physicians who had at-

tended the medical college with me and whose lines had not fallen in such pleasant places.

"Until I came to the World's Fair I had never looked on a woman with more than passing interest. By some chance I had escaped the usual juvenile love affairs through which most young men pass in their callow days, and I flattered myself I was proof against the attractions of the sex. I had not met Mildred then. One night a Chicago physician, one of my old school friends, invited me to spend an evening at his home. That night the whole course of my life was changed. The woman whom fate had reserved for me was there. She was his sister, Mildred Atherton."

Dr. Chester paused to pour another glass of brandy, and Holabird relighted his cigar.

"I will not bore you, Tom, with a description of her beauty," the doctor went on, "or of my enchantment when I found she was disposed to look upon me with favor. Enough to say that after a brief and somewhat impetuous courtship Mildred consented to be my wife. Before the close of the Exposition—less than three months after I first saw her—we were married.

"Of course, I was supremely happy. Like a boy on his first holiday, I planned a lengthy bridal tour which included not only the traditional swing around the circle of the great eastern cities, but a week of perfect rest and quiet at my father's farm in central New York. Mildred was delighted. Travel was her hobby, but, pleased as she was by the novel sights of the seacoast cities, she was even more charmed with the unusual surroundings of the dear old farm I had always called 'home.'

"Reared in a city, and knowing nothing of the delights of country life, my bride revelled in the peaceful delights of the farm and its surroundings. Chiefly she loved the old well—my boyhood's friend. Night after night, hanging on my arm, she would stroll down the shaded walk to the old mossy well, and, leaning over the curb, watch the bucket as I sent it down, down, until it plunged into the ice-cold water. Then, with smiles of childish delight, she would watch its ascent until, brimming with the clear water, it rested on the curb. Then she insisted on drinking from the battered old bucket, declaring that a cup or a glass took away the freshness of the water, and in this I smilingly humored her.

"Well, at last the week on the farm was over and we came home to the house I had ordered prepared for my queen in Chicago. Everything was as I had directed. Nothing was lacking to make the little home a miniature palace and Mildred was as delighted with it as she had been a few days before with the homely comforts and rude surroundings of the farmhouse.

"But before a week was out I saw a change in my girl—the first shadow I had ever seen upon her brow. I noticed that she seemed worried and abstracted when she thought I was not observing her, and when I questioned her she insisted she was not worried by anything in the world. She strove in every way to allay my anxiety, but, despite her best efforts, I saw that her mental trouble increased. Sometimes she would sit staring out of the window as though she were witnessing some great catastrophe in the street, and when I sought an explanation she laughed at my inquiries and assured me nothing was wrong.

"At first I ascribed it all to nervousness and hysteria and I applied all my professional skill to diagnosing the case. But as the days went by she grew more and more worried, and at length, one night, she admitted there was some mysterious trouble with her throat that was annoying her. With all my fears aroused I at once made a most minute and searching examination, but at its close I was forced to confess myself baffled. I could find absolutely nothing abnormal—nothing that should have given my wife the least trouble.

"I tried to explain to her that her trouble was purely imaginary and advised a change of scene to get her mind on other things. I planned a trip to Cuba for the winter, but she responded apathetically and seemed to grow more worried and abstracted.

"The mental strain began to tell on her appearance. Her sprightliness was all gone. She was pale and languid, with a scared look in her eyes constantly, except when she strove to banish it while talking with me. She took no interest in anything—theatres, society, drives, books—all were put aside. I grew alarmed lest what my professional training told me must be imagination should develop into a real malady.

"One night as I was dropping off to sleep I was startled to observe that Mildred appeared to be trembling beside me. I

turned and saw that she was in a paroxysm of fear, and that both her hands were clutching at her throat. Springing from bed I turned up the light and begged her to tell me what had startled her. In whispers she finally told me the awful fear that had been clutching her heart with a hand of ice. She believed there was something in her throat *and she believed it was alive.*"

Holabird started from his chair, staring at Dr. Chester in horror and amazement.

"Alive?" he repeated.

"Yes," said the doctor, "that was her ever-present nightmare. I tried in vain to soothe her, believing more firmly than ever that she was the victim of her fancies. I tried to explain the impossibility of what she feared, but she lay in my arms, shuddering and hysterical, the rest of the night. From that time the horror seemed to be with her more constantly than ever, because she made no attempt to conceal it. Day after day I would return from my office to find her pale and enervated, worn to a shadow through worry.

"I was in despair. All my arguments, all my scientific explanations, were of no avail. Little by little she told me how the Thing felt, to her disordered imagination. At first, she said, she noticed a slight tickling sensation in her throat and tried to remove it by coughing. When she coughed it would disappear, but after a time it was present again, and sometimes in a different place. At the beginning her nervousness was caused by fear that she was becoming ill—developing some throat or lung trouble that might become permanent. But one afternoon, while she was lying on a couch, the horror of her life came upon her suddenly.

"She felt the Thing moving in her chest. Clinging to my arm while she told me, my unhappy wife described the frightful agony that convulsed her that day as the moments slipped by, and as with each one the Thing seemed to move closer to her mouth. Finally, she said, she burst the spell that seemed to hold her and rushing into another room, fell upon her knees and prayed. The sudden action brought relief, for, when she was able to collect her senses and fix them upon the horror, the Thing was gone. There was no movement there.

"Then she prayed that I might be right when I told her it was

nervousness that was preying upon her, but again and again came the fearful, creeping sensation, until she convinced herself that the Thing she was cursed with must be alive. She hugged her secret to her breast. She dared not tell even me, lest I should think she was going mad, until at last the horror of it overpowered her and she broke down and confessed.

“Even after that my professional training scoffed at her story of despair. I could not bring myself to believe there was anything in the case but disordered nerves and an overtaxed brain, and I prescribed the physician’s only remedy in such an emergency — change of air and of scene. I dropped everything and took her on a long tour, but I might as well have remained at home with her. The Thing traveled with us.

“It never left her mind for an instant, and at night she would startle me by clutching my arm suddenly, grasping at her throat and whispering that it was there. I began to fear her mind would give way under the strain, and after our return home, to satisfy myself and leave no means untried, I summoned in consultation two of the most noted physicians in the country. I told them everything, and begged them, as brother practitioners, to give my unfortunate Mildred the most careful and painstaking examination possible.

“At its close I was as much in the dark as ever. Dr. Rupert and Prof. Hathaway agreed there was nothing — absolutely nothing — about my wife’s throat that should cause any such hallucinations, and their judgment coincided with mine, that the trouble was purely one of the brain and nerves, and should be treated accordingly. I told all this to Mildred, who had faded away to a shadow and had a fixed stare of horror in her eyes. I begged her, as she valued her happiness and my own — nay, her very life — to make a desperate effort to dispel the hallucinations which were wrecking her constitution. She smiled sadly — oh, so sadly, Tom, — and said she would try.

“A week later she awoke me one night with a frenzied shriek of despair and agony. I sprang from bed to turn up the light, and when I turned toward her again she was dead.”

“Dead?” ejaculated Holabird, who had half risen from his seat and was staring at the doctor.

"Dead," repeated Dr. Chester quietly. "Her hands were clutching her throat and the expression upon her face was one of the most intense horror. I have witnessed many deaths, but never one like that. The end came so quickly I could not believe that hope and life were gone, and in a frenzy of despair I applied all the tests known to the profession. I called for help and dispatched servants for Dr. Rupert and Prof. Hathaway. When they came I had given up hope and was sitting like a statue, staring at the dead face of my wife. Both physicians made a brief examination of the body, and after assuring themselves that Mildred was dead, led me away to another apartment. I was calm, but it was the calm of a dazed man, and the two doctors decided to leave me alone and remain within call for a time.

"For an hour I sat there, stunned and motionless. Then I was seized with an insane idea that I could yet resuscitate Mildred—that hope was not gone, that there was still life. I rushed to the room where she lay and flung myself upon the body, in an agony of grief, my face pressed against her beautiful white neck. As I lay there my numbed senses were suddenly startled into activity by something which perhaps appealed principally to my trained professional sense. Her throat beneath my cheek was throbbing with faint, regular pulsations!

"Instantly I arose and stared at the dead face. There was no hint of life. I applied my ear to the heart. All was still and pulseless. But when I placed my ear directly upon the spot on Mildred's neck where I had first discerned the movement I again discerned a rapid, rhythmic pulsation!

"I shouted aloud for help, and when a servant came in, trembling, I sent him for the two doctors, who were smoking and talking in an upper room. Barring the door behind the gaping servant I told the physicians of my discovery. In amazement they tried the experiment, and each distinctly felt the movement. Prof. Hathaway looked at me rather pointedly after he had examined the body and said:

"'Chester, there is one method of solving this riddle. Do you object?'

"'To a post-mortem examination?' I asked.

"He nodded and so did Dr. Rupert. I hesitated a moment.

"I do not object to an examination," I said, for I felt I was on the threshold of a solution of the mystery, 'but I will not be present. I will leave it in your hands.' I hurried out of the room, and in half an hour Prof. Hathaway sought me out.

"'Chester,' he said, 'the examination is over.'

"'What did you do?' I asked, half fearing to learn.

"'We made a small incision in the throat where the strange signs of life developed,' he said.

"'And you found——?' I demanded.

"'This,' he replied, holding forth on his hand the Thing that had hounded my Mildred to the grave—a small, green water-lizard."

"What?" cried Holabird, springing up, "alive?"

"Alive," said Dr. Chester. "The poor girl had undoubtedly swallowed it in embryo while drinking at the old well on the farm, and it had lived and grown in her stomach."

"And that," said Holabird, with starting eyes, "was the Thing——"

"Which cost her life," concluded the doctor, "that's all my story, Tom. Pass the brandy."

When he had finished the story Wentworth mopped his brow and stared fixedly for a few minutes at the last page of the manuscript. He felt, in a hazy, half-defined sort of way, that he had once, somewhere or other, heard an incident related of the nature described in the story. But that he had written the story—that he was capable of writing it—he at once dismissed from his mind as absurd and impossible. Yet there it lay before him in his own handwriting, a mute witness to the fact that he had written it.

The thing was positively uncanny, and it was a solemn and rather scared face he presented to the obliging clerk when he handed back the manuscript.

"Find what you wanted, sir?" asked the clerk, brightly.

"Oh—er—ah—yes, I found it," stammered Wentworth, "it's all right, thank you. I'm very much obliged for your kindness."

"Not at all. Come in again, sir," said the clerk affably.

Wentworth stammered something incoherent and stumbled out of the office in a daze. The thing was fast getting possession of him. What did it all mean? he asked himself for the hundredth time. There was no question now that the check was intended for him — that he and no other Ralph Wentworth had won the prize. But how had it happened?

Unable to frame a logical answer to his own question, he reached the street in a dreamy, unbelieving state of mind, and instinctively turned the right corners and dodged the vehicles until he found himself at his own door. His valet, quiet, imperturbable Johnson, admitted him. Johnson took his hat and coat and deftly wheeled an easy chair to the fire. Wentworth watched him absently.

Suddenly an idea struck him.

"Johnson," he exclaimed, "have you ever seen around here a long envelope — one of the sort they call document envelopes — I mean one with anything in it. Big and bulky, you know."

His valet studied a moment, while Wentworth watched him anxiously.

"You mean like this, sir?" he asked, going to a cabinet and producing a packet of long envelopes.

"Yes, yes," said Wentworth, eagerly, "that's the sort. Did you ever notice one of those with anything in it?"

"I think I did, sir," said Johnson.

"When?" demanded Wentworth. "How was it? What did you do with it?"

"The one I saw I mailed, sir," said the valet, "I hope there's nothing wrong, sir."

"Mailed?" echoed Wentworth, "to whom? How did you happen to mail it?"

"I don't remember now how it was addressed, sir," said Johnson, "but I remember one morning I found one of those big envelopes with a letter in it all sealed and addressed and stamped on your desk here, and I mailed it. You always leave any mail here for me to drop in the box if you have been writing late at night, sir, you know."

"Yes, yes, I know," said Wentworth, eagerly, "but how do you happen to remember this letter?"

"Well, sir," said Johnson, "it had three or four stamps on it and it was so big and bulky and heavy, sir, that I sort of kept it in mind. I never had a letter like that here before, sir."

Wentworth was pacing the floor excitedly by that time. The trail was growing warm.

"Now, Johnson, try and think," he commanded, "can't you remember when it was you found that letter here?"

"I'm almost positive, sir," said his valet, "that it was the next morning after you came home so late from Mr. Holroyd's bachelor dinner, sir."

Wentworth suddenly ceased pacing the floor, and clapped his hands together with a mighty smack.

"That's it," he cried, excitedly, "that bachelor dinner brings it all back to me. That's where I heard it. By George, that's right. Doc' Baldwin told the story. That's the very thing."

"Yes, sir," agreed Johnson, who had been watching his master's antics in some alarm. Wentworth stared at him as though he had just become aware of his presence in the room.

"Johnson," he said suddenly, placing both his hands on the shoulders of his servant, "did you see me when I came in that night?"

"I did, sir," said Johnson, simply.

"Tell the truth now, Johnson," commanded Wentworth, "was I drunk?"

"No, sir," answered the valet, "I should say you were a bit excited, sir. I helped you off with your clothes and you went right to bed, sir, inside of five minutes."

Wentworth stared at the floor a long time, and then his face slowly cleared.

"By George!" he muttered at length, "I got up in the night and wrote that in my sleep!"

"Yes, sir," said Johnson, "what will you wear this afternoon, sir?"



In re State vs. Forbes.*

BY WARREN EARLE.



F all the questions put to the lawyer, the one he is most often called upon to answer, if so be his work carries him that way, is how can you conscientiously defend a murderer when you know him to be guilty? And though there are many good answers to that question, viewed from the legal standpoint, they seldom, if ever, appeal to the lay mind. To the man in the street the man under indictment is probably guilty. If a jury subsequently so find him the original opinion is confirmed. If not, a deal of credit is given to the shrewdness of the lawyer as to one who has succeeded in setting at naught all the machinery of the law. In either instance, the public is absolutely sure of its facts, and the original query remains.

It has been my fortune to defend several men accused of high crimes and misdemeanors, and, invariably, my friends and acquaintances have asked me the question. Occasionally, I have been publicly criticized, or pityingly excused on the plea that it was my business, with the emphasis on the business. All this is fresher in my mind by reason of the fact that it has all been repeated in the last few weeks. Many of my cases have caused comment, but none have subjected me to a more universal uplifting of eyebrows and elevation of chins than my late defence of Dr. Forbes. In all justice to my critics I will say that the facts appearing on the trial rather justified them in their attitude, if such an attitude can ever be justified. Long before the trial was finished the public had condemned the defendant, and the verdict of the jury was in accordance with the public view. And, now that they have both had their say, I am inclined to have mine. Not that I intend to change public opinion, or attempt to do so, but because the facts present one of the most curious cases which has ever fallen under my notice.

* Copyright, 1906, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

For the benefit of those who have never heard of the case of the State *vs.* Forbes, I will briefly outline the evidence, as testified to by the witnesses: Dr. Forbes was a man thirty-six years of age, unmarried, and living very quietly in an old quarter of the city. His parents were both dead, and, in fact, it was not shown that he had any living relatives, except a younger sister who lived with and kept house for him. He was a well-educated man, of studious habits and possessed of sufficient means to allow of close application to scientific medical investigations, to which he seems to have devoted a large portion of his time. He had a laboratory at the back of his house, where he carried on his work and conducted his experiments. He was taciturn and diffident, a trifle priggish, and in consequence enjoyed the reputation among his neighbors of being queer, odd, haughty and "stuck up."

The sister, Rhoda Forbes, was a very beautiful girl of about twenty-four years, and the same neighbors who condemned the brother declared her bright, clever and vivacious. It appeared that they had been left as orphans when she was a young child, and that her education and maintenance had devolved upon the elder brother. Between them, and notwithstanding their constitutional differences in temperament, there existed a pleasant and wholesome relationship, a condition and mutual attitude, in short, which proved extremely baffling to the State's Attorney in his endeavors to prove motive. It is needless to say that the young lady had a number of suitors, but with a single exception, none of them attracted much attention upon the trial.

The exception was one Bert Lapham, the son of a merchant in the city, of good repute and large fortune. The young man was a college graduate, and, unlike his father, had a reputation around town which was far from savory. Very naturally that side of his character was not on exhibition while he was courting Rhoda Forbes, and from the evidence it was inferable that he was not an unwelcome visitor at the house. It did not appear that the Doctor encouraged his visits, but the same might have been said concerning any of the other young men. And aside from a certain jealousy which he seems to have manifested against all who sought favor of his sister, he showed no excessive ill-will toward Lapham. Such, then, was the apparent condition of affairs when,

on the morning of February 2d, 1905, Dr. Forbes met Lapham on the street, and deliberately and carefully shot him down. Lapham died almost instantly and without making any statement.

The Doctor was arrested and taken to the jail. He made no resistance, but, as is often the case with murderers, acted like a man who had planned up to a certain point and deed, and was without purpose thereafter. As soon as he was disposed of, the police went to his house, and there, on the operating table in the laboratory they found the dead body of the sister. The coroner was summoned, and an inquest was held. Two other doctors were called in, an autopsy was decided upon. That, too, was held, and the doctors reported that there were no visible signs of foul play. The verdict, being unexpected, aroused a deal of astonishment. The doctors were asked how she came to die, and in such a place, and they answered in a most astounding burst of medical candor that they did not know, and added that it was probably heart trouble.

Being without evidence then as to the sister, the grand jury merely indicted the Doctor for the murder of Lapham. The above are the facts elicited upon the trial; that which follows I learned from the lips of the doctor himself. Soon after his indictment he sent for me, and in response to his request I went to the jail.

I was obliged to wait but a few moments before he was brought in. I had read a few of the less lurid accounts of the affair, and had a fair idea of the facts and the man, but nevertheless, I was somewhat surprised at his appearance. He had been described as a man of medium height, dark complexion, black hair shot with gray, brown eyes, brown mustache and Vandyke beard. All this was very true, but they had omitted to mention the low and very wide forehead, and the fact that he looked at one with the steady, unblinking stare of the short-sighted naturalist. He looked the well-to-do doctor of studious habits, and as I stepped forward to greet him I thought: "He might murder for the sake of science, but not in passion."

He received me calmly, and we seated ourselves.

"You sent for me," I said.

"Yes," his tones were well modulated. "Yes. I presume you are aware of the indictment against me — and the case?"

"I have read some of the accounts. You are indicted for the murder of Lapham."

"Yes. It occurred about as the newspapers have it. As a matter of fact, I presume there is no adequate defense."

"Suppose you tell me the facts," I suggested.

He shrugged his shoulders. "You have them already," he replied.

"All of them?" I queried.

"No —" he hesitated. "No — but all that would do you any good."

"It would be better if I knew them all," I said.

"There is nothing which would relieve."

"But there may be something which would entertain."

He nodded and smiled and twirled the point of his beard reflectively.

"Briefly," he said, "I met Lapham on the street. I said 'Sir, I am about to kill you.' I raised the revolver and fired. I left the house with the purpose of doing so. That is what I believe you call premeditation, and the thing for which you hang people. I bought the revolver at a store on the way down town, and I had the man show me how to load and fire it. This I did in order that I might not miss my aim when I met him. I thought out all the details before I left the house."

"Exactly," I said, "And now for the matters which occurred before the premeditation."

"They would not aid you, I fear."

"And I am certain they would entertain me," I repeated.

He looked at me between half-closed lids steadily, keenly, quizzically.

"I like your attitude," he said, and after another short pause, and a few more twirls of his beard he added, "but I warn you that in all I say you will find no particle of what you call competent evidence."

"Motives seldom constitute legal excuses," I volunteered, "and we need not consider them in that light, if you desire it so."

He handed me his cigarette case, and while holding the match for him I for the first time noticed a certain gleam in the eyes which was distinctly animal. He inhaled a long breath and

dropped his lids in the manner of a cat in contentment by a fire, or a tiger in a quiet mood.

"If you are to understand me at all," he said, "you must know that our family is peculiar in one respect. We are what you might call a telegraphic race. You know that by instinct, development or training, some families in all their ramifications have certain traits, I do not mean merely physical traits, but more particularly, tendencies to certain lines of work. I can point you to families which have had ministers in the line for centuries. There are others which have run to lawyers or merchants, or clowns or what not. In ours this tendency is all to telegraphy. My father and all his brothers and their father before them, and that in the days of the infancy of the science, were all connected with the telegraphic business.

"I do not suppose there is a man or woman of our family today who is not thoroughly familiar with the instruments and code of the craft. I, myself, in common with my sister, learned the code as soon as I could read. We had senders all over the old house at home, and among my earliest recollections is the sharp clicking of the machines. You are aware that the things we inherit and the lessons we learn in our early childhood gradually become instinct—no less. So it was with myself and my sister. We never forgot our early training and, in fact, fostered it. In a hundred ways we used it about the house where we lived together, and we even played with it elsewhere. At the theatre or in church we would tap messages to each other with our finger nails on wood, thus":

He drummed on the arm of his chair in a nonchalant manner, and with such a perfect show of indifference that had my attention not been called, I should not have caught the peculiar telegraphic rhythm.

"Our house was fitted up with all sorts of devices. The senders were concealed in out-of-the-way places, and generally within reach of the hand, so that often when I was in the laboratory and Rhoda in the parlor she would be telling me the things the caller of the moment was doing and saying. Of course the position and character of these instruments we kept secret from all our acquaintances, and a certain attachment which rendered the sending sound-

less and which was and is a secret of my family, greatly aided us to this end.

“Personally, I was expected by my parents to follow in their footsteps, but as I grew older, I found that I had a natural inclination toward medicine and surgery, and particularly the latter. This tendency increased with age, and before I had finished my academic course in college I had made up my mind to practise. That plan the mechanical turn in my blood frustrated. As I went on I found myself absorbed by the scientific phase of the subject. I was still in college when the X-ray was first discovered. It took a strong hold upon my imagination. I watched and followed the improvements, and without further parley decided to put my life into that line of work. Being sufficiently well fortified financially so that I was not obliged to practise for a living, I gave it up, except in so far as I found it running with my scientific work. As you can see, I am not an old man, and indeed, it has been but a few years since my graduation.

“Those years I have spent in the attainment of one object, the perfection of the X-ray. As you are doubtless aware, despite all the advertisement given the matter in the newspapers, the most that the masters have been able to do has been to use the ray for the discovery and location of solid substances embedded in or surrounded by substances of less consistency. That is, for instance, the perception of bones in the flesh of the arm or leg, or the presence of metals in the body.

“It was my purpose in taking up the study to perfect the apparatus to the point where it would be possible to discern the blood vessels, or possibly, the nerves. To this task I gave all my time, and, Sir, I can state to you that I have been successful!”

He leaned forward and searched my face. His eyes shone with the fervor of the enthusiast. He drew a long breath and sank back in his chair, and it was several moments before he continued his narrative.

“I have in my laboratory a table, an operating table, which is the result of my inventions. On that table I place a body. Beneath is the ray, and connected with the ray, above and directly over, is the ordinary fluoroscope with a microscopic attachment. I shall not undertake to describe the entire matter to you. Unless you

are of a scientific turn of mind you would not understand, and —” He paused and I shook my head. “Ah, you are not — then I will refrain. It is sufficient to say that the fluoroscope and the connected ray may be moved about at will, and any part of the body may be subjected to investigation. The light is developed in a bulb as in the ordinary machine, but the quality of it and thereby its usefulness for descrying nerves, muscles or blood vessels, is the secret which I have learned. You may perhaps get a better comprehension if I state that I use a separate tube for each species of investigation. That is, I attach the ordinary X-ray for the detection of metal. With another tube all the intervening substances fade into fog and the nerves stand revealed. So, by yet another adjustment, I can study the blood, the microscope aiding very materially, as you can readily understand.”

He evidently thought I was becoming wearied by his discourse, for he went on:

“You do not see what all this has to do with the murder of Lapham.” He spoke as though murder on the public street with a cheap revolver purchased for the purpose was a scientific phenomenon. I replied that I was much interested in his discovery, and had no doubt that it bore significantly upon the tragedy.

“It does,” he muttered, “It does,” and suddenly lapsed into silence. He sat so, staring fixedly into space, the smoke trailing up slowly from the stump of his cigarette. I watched, and I saw the gleam gradually grow in his eyes, exactly as it grew in the eyes of the murderer Harley when the heart of the man he had stabbed, with the hole made by his knife, was produced in court. Dr. Forbes suddenly flicked the ash from his cigarette and turning upon me swiftly, said:

“I knew the man for a villain from the first. I knew it instinctively. I knew it from observation. But, like a fool, I could not be content with mere knowledge. I had to tell someone what I thought, and, most foolish of all, I told Rhoda. She did not, would not, so consider him. I was afraid she would fall in love with him. He came and I said nothing. He continued to come and I protested. She laughed — defended him. He came more and more frequently, and, finding it was useless to object, I shut myself in my laboratory and trusted that her natural good sense

would find him out. They became intimate, how intimate I never fully realized until one evening, while he was calling, the telegraphic instrument in the laboratory clicked off the message, 'Come to the library.'

"I dropped my work and rushed in. They greeted me with a burst of laughter, and to my queries Rhoda explained that she had been showing all our private means of communication, and she had sent the message to prove their efficiency! I was intensely angry, not so much because of the poor jest at my expense, as because of the revelation of our secrets to a stranger. I fear I talked too sharply. I certainly left the room in a rage.

"As a matter of fact, I probably took the incident too much to heart, but, at the time, it seemed to me an infallible indication that she loved the man, and I had no desire that she should marry him. This fear, however, was groundless, for but a short time afterwards, she came to me one night and told me that he had proposed to her and that she had refused him. I asked how he took it, and she reluctantly admitted that he had been very angry. I expected that this would put an end to his visits, but it did not. The man was infatuated, and continued to call regularly.

"In the meantime, in fact, all the time, there was another young man who seemingly could not be kept away. You may know him. He is a young attorney and a very decent chap — Hal Drenning."

I acknowledged a slight acquaintance.

"I will confess that I was rather prepossessed in his favor and hoped that if anyone were successful it might be he. His principal fault seemed to be a quick and terrible temper. I knew him to be preferable to Lapham, and said so, and when I said it I was surprised to notice that Rhoda blushed. Perhaps I was too much inclined to dictate to her, but seeing her so, I said:

"'Rhoda, I wouldn't flirt with him if I were you.' She laughed and said, 'why not?'

"'I think he loves you,' I replied, 'and he quite meets with my approval.'

"She curtsied mockingly, and mockingly said:

"'But how can I marry him when Bert says I shall marry him and him alone?'

"'When did he say that?' I asked.

“‘Oh, the other evening, after he had accused me of seeing too much of Mr. Drenning.’

“‘I spoke my mind rather plainly concerning his impertinence, and, still angry, was leaving the room, when she danced before me and smilingly declared me foolish.

“‘I shall marry neither of them,’ she said, ‘I shall remain here and be your loyal and devoted sister.’

“‘You will refuse Hal?’ I said.

“‘Certainly, I shall refuse them all,’ she cried.

“‘Hal would not take a refusal calmly,’ I said, and as I spoke the thought of his ungovernable temper occurred to me. Indeed he would not take a refusal lightly, and if she did intend to refuse him then her conduct had been inexcusable, for she had flirted with him outrageously.

“‘This conversation took place a little over a week ago. Last Tuesday evening Rhoda came down at eight, dressed to receive visitors. I was in the laboratory at work when she came in to me and twirled about to show me a new dress. I said something about it in response to her inquiries as to its length and fit and style, etc., and I then asked her who was coming, and she, in a sort of a pouting way, said she did not know whether she would tell me or not. I was somewhat piqued, for I could see no reason for her attitude, when, with one of her quick changes, she broke into a laugh and said—I remember her words distinctly:

“‘Oh, Oh, you are a funny brother. Well, if you must know, it is—’ she hesitated for a moment—‘your friend, Mr. Drenning. You see, he is liable to propose any evening, and I want to be prepared to meet the emergency.’

“‘Still laughing, she tripped lightly out of the room, and of course it never occurred to me that she might be joking. Somewhat later, I heard the bell ring and footsteps in the hall. I continued at my work, which was that of testing some new tubes and recording their relative strengths. Later in the evening I heard the front door slam, and some one pass out. It was an ordinary occurrence, and made no marked impression on my mind. You will understand. I have often noticed, as I presume you have, that the unusual is seldom accompanied by what might be termed anticipatory phenomena.

"It must have been an hour later that I finished my task, and then, for the first time, it occurred to me that Rhoda had not been in to say good-night, nor had I heard her go upstairs. I lit a cigarette and, opening the door into the hall, saw that the light in the parlor was still burning. Thinking that she was reading, and that it was time for her to retire, I walked down the hall and stepped into the room."

The doctor paused and passed his hand across his eyes.

"I presume," he continued, "that I shall continue to stand and gaze from that doorway until I am aimlessly twirling at the end of a rope. She was seated in the Morris chair by the table and she was facing me. Her body had collapsed upon itself, her head hung to the left, and her tongue was lolling from a mouth idiotically agape, and the spittle was drooling from the lips to the lace frill of the gown. Her eyes were open and glazed and full of a wild terror. Her arms lay along the arms of the chair, and about them there was a queer suggestion of a sudden relapse after vainly striving to reach something. I do not know, I cannot explain to you, how or why a recumbent figure could or would suggest a collapse preceded by a straining for some definite object, but such was the effect produced upon me in the instant I stood staring, dazed.

"Recovering, I rushed to her and straightened her up. She was loose flesh in my hands. I felt for her pulse and felt — nothing. I tried again and there was no movement. I held the crystal face of my watch to her mouth. There was no breath visible. She was dead. I dropped her hand and ran back to the laboratory for a stimulant. I always kept a supply in a small cabinet in the corner, and in that I was groping for the flask I wished when I was startled by the quick click of one of the telegraphic instruments. I stopped in amazement. There was a message coming in from the room I had just left, and the touch was her touch. I would have known it in a thousand.

"Jerkily, in the abbreviations we used for greater convenience, were ticked off these words, 'Come, being killed by' — I waited for no more, but rushed to the room. It was empty save for her, and she was exactly as I had left her, except that her hand had slipped off the chair arm and was hanging down outside.

"Just a moment," I said, "Was there a sender on that chair?"

He stared at me fixedly, the lids slowly rolling back from the whites of his eyes. "Your mind travels with mine, Sir," he said in a husky, rasping whisper. "There *was* a sender on that chair arm, on the under side. Do you think it possible that she could have revived sufficiently to send? Between us, — between us, — when I dropped her hand before leaving for the whiskey I left it on the arm by the sender. I know that the hand was not hanging down when I went away."

"Go on," I prompted.

He paid no heed to me, but commenced to talk as though to himself. "But she was dead," he said, "She was dead. She had been dead for at least an hour. There was absolutely no change in her when I had returned. She was dead both before and after. I knew it, though I denied it to myself."

He seemed to come out of his musings, and turning to me again, went on with his narrative:

"I picked her up and carried her, a lifeless, slippery, jelly-like mass, into the laboratory, and laid her on the operating table. There, in frantic haste, I tried every means of revival I knew, and all without success. Sir, from the time I first caught sight of her until I finally gave up the struggle I vow to you there was no movement, sign, symbol or symptom of life. She was dead.

"Like anyone else suddenly deprived of a great possession I did not at first grasp its full meaning. Indeed, I doubt if I ever will. Not until I gave up my efforts at resuscitation did I commence to wonder. The coroners have returned their verdict. You know what they say. They do not know what caused her death. They think I killed her while experimenting, I fancy."

He glanced at me from the corner of his eye and went on calmly, as a totally disinterested witness might on the stand:

"There was no mark on the body. There was not a scratch or pin prick on the skin. There were no bruises, no discolorations, no abrasions, no traces or signs of physical violence. I was about to name it heart disease, when I remembered the message which had come in over the wire, 'Come, being killed by —'. For the first time I realized that the message was incomplete. For some unaccountable reason that fact had theretofore escaped me. Then, Sir, I became calm and went about my work systematically.

“I had no doubt about the identity of the murderer, if there was one. I reasoned that Drenning had proposed, been refused, and, perhaps in a fit of passion, had struck and killed her. ‘But—but’, I said, ‘there has been no striking. It must have been done in some other way. But if it was done, then there will certainly be some trace.’ The body was already on the operating table, so I attached the proper tube and searched for metallic substances. I expected to discover the presence in the body of some hard, foreign substance matter capable of producing death. I did not know what form it would take, so I searched carefully, realizing that it might take any one of a dozen odd and unexpected appearances such, for instance, as a needle driven into and broken off in some vital part. You are perhaps aware that long, slender glass needles, if thrust in quickly, will kill very effectually, and, with such an instrument, if it is broken carefully, there is scarcely any wound visible.

“I worked over her for hours and hours. I found nothing, but I would not give up. Again and again I examined, and always with the same result. Sir, it was only after four long hours that I sat down, realizing that further search was in vain.

“It would be impossible for me to explain to you the feeling of anger which possessed me during the next half hour. It was a rage growing out of a sense of impotence, inspired by a realization that, despite all my knowledge, I was baffled. I went over every expedient I knew. I thought of every device of which I had ever heard. I endeavored to invent new and untried experiments, and while so groping it occurred to me that an examination of the blood and the nerves might by a remote chance reveal something.

“In desperation, I fitted on a tube for the circulatory system and swung the fluoroscope over the body. I thought I would begin with the hands, for there, in some of the very small blood vessels where the corpuscles pass in single file, if there was anything wrong it would be visible. I turned on the power and put my eye to the microscope. Gradually, as I looked, and my eye became accustomed to the light, the flesh faded away from the bones, leaving them crude and ghastly like a withered and steamed stump of a limb. In the continued light from the tube, and even as I watched, this, too, faded into fog and disappeared. Then gradu-

ally and slowly the circulatory system came into view, a network of veins like the web of a spider.

"I was looking at the tip of the first finger of the right hand. And now, as the blood became more and more distinct, I changed the object glass of my microscope for a stronger one, and with that brought into the field one section of one minute vessel. It needed but a glance to assure me that the machine was in perfect order. There were the outer walls of the vein, and within, like coins in a groove, were the disk-like corpuscles, not as I had often seen them, moving slowly along their way, but stopped, set in their places, still, as machinery is still when the engine is dead.

"I examined closely, and was about to abandon my investigations, finding nothing, when I happened to notice that all the corpuscles were arranged in one certain way. It was such an unusual thing that it attracted my attention. Instead of the red and white corpuscles being mixed together as they usually are, without any order or sequence, all those within the field of the microscope were as accurately ordered as though they had been arranged and put in place. They lay in series, three red disks clogged into a line, a short space, one white disk, two more reds and a long space, after which the same thing was repeated. It was a collection of groups of corpuscles, each group distinct from each other and each composed as I have stated."

I fancy that I started, for he quickly sketched the following:

... o.. ... o.. ... o.. ... o..

"It was thus that they were arranged," he said.

I did not look enlightened, for I saw nothing strange.

"Do you know what those are?" he asked, leaning forward excitedly. "They are the Morse code letters L and A, and together form the abbreviation for the name Lapham, which we always used in designating him whenever we had occasion to put his name on the wire. Sir, there were no foreign or poisonous manifestations in her blood, but in all her veins, in all her body, I found the corpuscles arranged that way. What significance has it? I am not a psychologist. I cannot explain, but you will readily recognize the condition confronting us.

"We are reduced to an alternative. When I entered the room she was either dead or in a comatose condition. If she was dead,

the sending of the partial message can only be explained on spiritualistic grounds, or on the theory that the subliminal self, which in our family is probably telegraphic, was temporarily roused to action by the touch of the finger upon the button. In that case, it would not be imagining vainly to suppose that the whole material fabric was concentrated in the expression to which it was giving utterance, and such concentration would very naturally involve the fundamental elements of life, the blood among the first.

"On the other hand, if she was not dead, the same reasoning holds good. Given the concentration which certainly must have been present, add but the hand slipping from the chair arm and sender the instant the name of the murderer was to be transmitted, and when the whole system was charged with the symbol, and the identical situation here produced might not be impossible."

He stopped abruptly, absently raised his dead cigarette to his lips, drew on it once or twice, and, looking at me languidly, said:

"I see that you follow me. You now have the entire narrative preliminary to the premeditation. I can only add that when I announced to Lapham my intention of shooting, primal fear shone in his eyes and his thickening tongue stuttered a feeble 'God, how did you find it out?' That is the entire story, and as I said, you will recognize the absolute inutility of it all as evidence."

"There is one thing more," I said, "What caused her death?"

The keeper was moving nearer, and to avoid being overheard he leaned over and whispered in my ear. I was astonished.

"How did he know of that?" I asked. "It is most unusual."

"I don't know," he said, "but it can be done that way."

And that is why I defended Dr. Forbes. After his conviction, I intended to let him go before the court and tell his story, and thereby save his neck, and get himself incarcerated in the insane asylum but, unfortunately, the night after he was pronounced guilty he was found dead in his cell. The doctors said, in another burst of medical candor, that they did not know the cause of death, but were inclined to suspect the heart.



The Great Power.*

BY HENRY OYEN.



Of course, there is no reason why you should believe this story. Judging by all rational standards, the tale is quite impossible in this day and age. If the Society for the Discovery and Exploitation of Psychical Phenomena ever has it brought to its attention it may stop and ponder awhile. Otherwise, it is expected to meet with little credence.

You can hear the story told almost any sunny day, if you will linger in the little 'dobe squares or along the roads that are in the vicinage of Ildefonse, where the air is so dry and light that there is nothing to breathe for, and there is sun, and sun, and the only material things are the dark, clear-cut shadows on the light sand. Sometimes you will hear it in the sleepy, drone-toned patois of the peon; another time it will be in the matter-of-fact tone of the white citizen. But always, always, whether it be Gringo or Mexicano who opens his heart and tells you the story, it will be accompanied by such apology as opens this tale: "Of course you will scoff, señor, but it is all the truth."

San Miguel — a hundred dirty, red 'dobe houses, an old mission, and a great square — lies to the south and west of Ildefonse, on the very edge of the never-changing desert of yellow sands. At Ildefonse there are boards and sidewalks, and some of the houses have even floors in them; but at Miguel this is all left behind and there is only the atmosphere of the old 'dobes with the clay floors, the crumbling mission, and absolutely naught to suggest the year or the century.

Bradley, the northern doctor, came to Miguel because of many things, according to the people of the village. He was a bank robber, this blue-eyed man of the North; he had killed a man;

* Copyright, 1906, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

he had weak lungs ; he was there to write of the old mission ; to let the modern world of the eastern and northern states know how near they were to the seventeenth century and the miracles of the church. So said the people, and Bradley laughed.

The reason for Bradley's presence in Miguel was quite inconsequential and trivial. Miguel was two hundred miles from the railroad. So Bradley came.

There was peace and rest, long sunny days and cool nights, during which there was nothing to do but sit in a long chair and soak in the joy of living, and this is what Bradley needed. But the fact which is of importance is that it was at Miguel that Bradley met Meta.

Bradley had dreamed of Meta for the better half of his life. He had dreamed of her while a boy at school ; she had followed him through his medical studies, to Germany, where his education was completed, and all through the rest of his thirty-one years. He went to balls where the women were by all accorded the palm for beauty and found himself wondering why none of them were like Meta. He was entirely practical, was Bradley, but Meta was in his dreams for a good share of the time, else he would have been married long ago.

When she looked out of a wide-windowed 'dobe court and laughed, Bradley knew why he had come to Miguel.

There was no need for an introduction. He knew her at once ; she knew him. It was as if they had walked together for much of their lives.

"Meta," said Bradley after her. Her voice was the voice of the Dream Meta.

"My heart's heart," said Meta, in the extravagant phrases of her people. And they laughed. Bradley was holding her hand. And Bradley knew then that for him there was no longer any trail that led back to the North. There was nothing any more, save the lazy sun, the clear-cut shadows, the drowse of the 'dobes, — and Meta.

This discovery in itself was nothing so remarkable, for many a man of the North has found in the eyes of the girls of Meta's people that for which he searched long and vainly among the maids of his own North. Many men have done so — and forgotten.

Bradley was different. Bradley established himself permanently in Miguel. Bradley was a doctor, and there was scope for doctors in and around this part of the land.

Bradley practised little. Wherein was there sense of hurrying and worrying to build up a practice that would yield a professional reputation and eventually riches, when here, in a sun-washed land of bright colors, was ease and content with little price of purchase? Why work, when in the end there was nothing, after all, save Meta? It was delightfully simple. This feeling comes quickly to men in the sand land.

In the daytime Bradley was one of the few Americanos of the new quarter of the town as a matter of form. He dressed for dinner and kept his face clean and his clothes white. But when the shadows of the 'dobe houses grew long in the plaza and the cool hush of night called the people from within the doors, Meta and her lover sat on the roof bench of the 'dobe house and communed in the tongue which is peculiar neither to Saxon or Castilian. Sometimes Meta sang the love songs of her own tongue, and then the people on the roofs two houses away heard a strong, subdued voice go haltingly through the chorus. Sometimes Bradley sang, sometimes "Forever," and again "Vanity." But whoever it was that sang, the song had to do with the same theme; it was Them, only two of them, for whom the world was made — there were only two people in the universe worth a single moment's thought.

Then, one day, Bradley was called away to professional duty, and Meta was left alone to wait for the return of her lover. It was to Sangre De Cristo that Bradley went. Sangre De Cristo is on the other side of the untrailed desert from Miguel. The road around is five days long, and no man was there alive who could say he had journeyed through the sands since the wells were dried up.

There was a distemper of some kind at Sangre De Cristo. Was it possible that it was the Little Plague? Pray the good saint whose picture hung on the mission wall that it was not. But would the great doctor from the North come with his great wisdom and bag of medicines to look upon the faces of the sick at Sangre De Cristo and make them well? It was the old padre who sent the word. The professional instinct was developed strong in Bradley.

"I must go, dear heart," he said to Meta. "It will not be long. If you need me, call for me, and I will hear; I know I will."

The conditions at Sangre De Cristo were much worse than the messenger had told. There was much fever there, the people were stark with fright, and the sanitation was awful. Bradley had enough of the northern energy left to do many things in a short time. He divided the people of the village into two classes — the sound and the unsound. He commissioned the venerable padre as chief nurse, and devoted himself to the simplified problem of preventing one class from falling ill, and keeping the other from dying with too great a frequency.

But the peons were slow to think and slower to act. They were safe now. Of course, the señor of The Medicines was here. They had no further concern in the matter, the señor be blessed a thousand times. So they resigned themselves, like children, to the care of Bradley. Bradley was almost alone, for the padre was old and feeble. It was a week before he had affairs adjusted so that he might sleep with an easy conscience. It was a week later before the people were whipped into such shape that it was worth the Doctor's while to take off his clothes when going to sleep. Then he retired to his bed in the old mission to gather up two weeks' lost sleep in one night.

Possibly there was something in the quiet blue night air of the old mission house, the air of rest and sleep in walls three hundred years old, that oppressed Bradley. Perhaps there was something in the wind that came over the yellow sands from Miguel. Bradley found himself sitting upright in the middle of the night, uncertain whether he had slept or not. He was talking to himself and his first conscious words were: "That cursed messenger!"

The plague was at Miguel, and he was cursing the man who bore the message of the padre. The man must have been infected himself. The thing was all clear to Bradley. It had not come to him with a shock. He but awoke and knew that the fact was impressed upon his mind. He was perfectly wide-awake, sane, and in possession of his senses. He knew positively, the plague was at Miguel, and he arose and dressed hurriedly, for the message of the night was thumping in his head and Meta was among

the stricken. It all came to him in the little 'dobe room as plainly as if it had been spoken, and he was not surprised in the least.

Bradley was a confirmed scoffer at matters spiritualistic. His professional education had made this certain. He was eminently practical, but there was no denying a thing such as this. The plague was at Miguel and Meta was stricken. It was as if some one had entered the room, spoken the news quietly, and departed, leaving naught behind him to show that he had been there but the memory of the words.

"But, señor, how do you know this?" gasped the padre. "There is no messenger, and we have no despatch wire strung thus far."

"Never mind, Father," said Bradley; "get me a horse and get it for me quick."

"But, señor, you cannot go so, alone, with only one horse. The way around the mountain is long and hard."

"Get me the horse; I'm in a hurry." The little padre hustled around patiently. He was not to be denied, this man in a hurry.

Bradley took a bottle of water, a piece of dried meat, his little bag, and mounted.

"Be good, Padre," he called out, sharply.

"Adios, my son, may the good saints ride with you," answered the old priest. But he called out in anguish when Bradley turned his horse's head out on the yellow sands straight toward Miguel.

The evening of the second day a man, gray and drawn, came staggering into the plaza of Miguel. The people clustered around, discussing with many motions and in excited tones the sickness which had stricken their people, just as Bradley knew they would be.

"Señor!" they called. The man looked up, and they saw it was the face of the northern doctor, with years of age suddenly added to it.

"Señor, señor, the blessed saints are truly good! The plague is here! We sent a messenger for you but yesterday — but you are here ere he could have reached you. What —"

Bradley had never stopped. He knew they were babbling at him and blessing him as their savior, but he kept on, straight to

the sick bed in the house with the roof bench. SHE was there, and ill, just as he knew she would be. She looked up and smiled happily.

"I called for you, my heart," she said, weakly.

"And I heard, I heard you," replied the practical-minded Bradley.

"But, señor, how did you come?" queried an old man. "Not surely by the road around the mountain, for that is a five-days' ride and she was stricken but yesterday — at sundown. And from the desert you —"

"From the desert I came," said Bradley.

"Not from Sangre De Cristo?"

"From Sangre De Cristo."

"But señor, it is a three-days' ride, and you must have water every twelve hours."

"I came in two days and part of one night," was Bradley's answer. "I watered — my horse and I — at Laguna de Cuato."

The villagers looked at each other and at Bradley, queerly.

"Señor," said one, softly, "there has been no water in Laguna de Cuato for four years."

"Señores," said Bradley, unhesitatingly, "I watered — I and my horse — there this morning."

But they went later and found the lake with its bottom powder dry, just as it had been for four years, with Bradley's horse dead in the gray dust — and it is that which makes the story so utterly impossible.



The Essence of Advertisement.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



HE proprietor and the general manager of Copeland's Dry Goods Emporium were in consultation. There was a third party to the consultation, a dapper little bald-headed gentleman who, an hour before, had introduced himself as E. Dodge, the inventor of a new perfume called The Essence of Advertisement, which article he sought to introduce into a few select stores in San Francisco.

The proprietor and the general manager had heard the little inventor out without showing him out. Indeed, they had listened with growing interest to his dissertation on the value of The Essence of Advertisement, and had agreed to order a heavy consignment of the perfume, should the sample prove a complete success.

The little inventor-demonstrator was all confidence. Uncorking a quart bottle of the Essence, he went through the store and sprinkled the counters with a slight quantity of the stuff. He also dashed some upon the threshold of the emporium doors and against the large plate-glass windows without, as well as on the sidewalk itself, for, strange to say, the Essence was not to be sold over the counter but was to be sprinkled about the bazaar.

The fluid was as colorless as water, yet as fragrant as white violets, and soon the emporium was pervaded with its delicious, penetrating odor.

"You see, gentlemen," explained the little demonstrator, "all matter is spirit and all spirit is matter. Or, in other words, all things both physical and spiritual are one in their final element, and matter can be changed into spirit and spirit into matter. This Essence of Advertisement is materialized thought. By a certain secret process I collect the advertising thought of a number of

* Copyright, 1906, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

men of advertising genius and force these thoughts into the perfume of violets, somewhat as gases are charged into natural mineral waters, and a breath of this prepared perfume, when drawn into the lungs, acts precisely the same upon the person inhaling it as a column of choice advertisements would act upon that person. Thus, by sprinkling the Essence upon the counters and before the doors of the bazaar, every man and woman who comes within inhaling distance of the perfume is strongly inclined to purchase — and purchase heavily — those goods which you have on sale, exactly as one would be moved to purchase those goods immediately upon reading some masterly written advertisement. By evening your sales will attest in fat figures the perfect truth of my assertions."

The proprietor drew a deep breath of the delicious violet fragrance, and patting the little inventor on the back, beamed graciously.

"We shall see," he said. "We shall see."

The cashier was perhaps the first that day to be aware of a sudden and excessive increase of trade at Copeland's Dry Goods Emporium. Money poured into his office, not by the dimes and dollars but by fives and twenties — a stream of gold — for in California coin, not paper, is still the everyday currency — ran towards the rear of the bazaar along the "change" wire, and returned a stream of silver. The counters were crowded with buyers, though no special bargains were on sale, and it seemed that every one who passed before the great show-windows of the store stopped to admire, then hurried in to buy.

Soon the tills were emptied of silver change, and the manager was called up and notified to that effect. He immediately reported to the proprietor the happy state of affairs.

Beaming like a sunbeam in clover and dew, the proprietor received the news, rubbed his hands, patted the manager on the shoulder, and without a word of notice increased that gentleman's salary a hundred dollars a month.

"It was The Essence of Advertisement that did the trick!" the manager felicitated himself. "What a lucky stroke it was that I listened to the little inventor and didn't turn him away, as I was about to do."

The clerk sent out for that purpose brought in two large sacks of silver change, yet the cashier's office barely got through the day without sending for more silver, so heavy were the afternoon's sales.

"Oh, what a delicious fragrance of violet!" exclaimed a certain lady patron, typical of all the bazaar's patrons, and turning to the solicitous salesman she ordered a dozen silk shirt waists, whereas she had visited the store intending to purchase but one. "What a perfectly exquisite fragrance! It reminds me of when I was a happy, care-free little girl!"

The next morning, when the inventor called to learn what success had attended his Essence, he was met with wide-open arms. Policy would have cautioned the proprietor and the general manager to have received the little gentleman but lukewarmly, that they might beat down the cost of the perfume — which was one hundred dollars a quart — or forestall the price being advanced. But the stuff had proved such a brilliant success that these two gentlemen cast all policy to the wind, and when E. Dodge finally took his leave he had booked an order for five thousand dollars worth of the Essence, with the one condition that for six months he should not sell any of the precious fluid to any other dry-goods store in San Francisco.

As the inventor had guaranteed, The Essence of Advertisement proved a success; a success so astonishing that within a week, and notwithstanding the fact that Copeland withdrew all of his customary heavy advertisements from the papers, he was forced to engage four additional buyers to keep his stock replenished, and he and his general manager felicitated themselves on having fallen into a bed of clover.

But suddenly they found burrs in the clover. While thousands daily visited the bazaar and purchased heavily, the astounding fact was soon discovered that once having bought from the counters of the emporium the patron rarely returned.

Could it be that the Essence, while crowding the store with transient custom, was driving away all steady patronage?

A letter was hastily written to E. Dodge, laying the facts before him and asking for advice. Two weeks later the advice came. It was as follows:

MARTIN COPELAND,

Proprietor Copeland's Dry Goods Emporium:

Dear Sir,—The reason why patrons, once having purchased at your store, rarely return, is to be explained by the fact that you are using the Essence of Advertisement in too pure a state. I send you herewith a recipe for its dilution; have a druggist attend to the matter at once. There is such a thing as over-advertising. When your customers breathe the Essence in too pure a state, they are incited to buy more goods than they can use, and as soon as they quit the bazaar and come from under the spell of the perfume they repent their heavy purchases, and, out of chagrin, do not return. The remedy is to dilute the Essence according to the recipe enclosed, and while your sales will fall off somewhat, they will show a much healthier state.

Very truly,

E. DODGE.

On receipt of this letter of advice, the general manager immediately sent out a clerk with a quart of The Essence of Advertisement, instructing him to have the stuff diluted according to directions at the nearest druggist. Slipping on an orange peel before a rival store, the clerk spilt the vial, and the contents ran over the sidewalk. Immediately all the passers-by in that neighborhood began to pour into the rival store, and the unprecedented sales of that house, while the odor of the perfume lasted, astounded and mystified the proprietor.

This unfortunate clerk was immediately discharged, and another was sent out with a second bottle of the Essence. He proved more fortunate, or less careless, and thereafter the diluted perfume only was used at Copeland's, and though sales were not as heavy as formerly, they showed a far healthier state, customers not failing to return to the bazaar when in need of new goods.

Copeland's Dry Goods Emporium now became enviously noted for the amazing amount of steady business that it was doing, and for the exquisite violet fragrance that haunted its shelves and counters, and other stores, hoping thereby to attract custom, began to imitate the latter novelty. But the fragrance they used was merely the ordinary violet perfume of commerce and not the marvelous Essence of Advertisement, and of course these imitators had their cost and labor for nothing.

Six months passed, and his stock of Essence growing alarmingly low, Copeland wrote to the headquarters of E. Dodge in New York City for a ten thousand dollar consignment of the precious fluid. Within three weeks his order returned, the envelope thereof bearing the official stamp, Party Dead.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the alarmed proprietor, “Dodge is dead, and perhaps his secret has died with him!”

And so it proved. The little inventor had sunk into an untimely grave, taking with him a jewel brighter than The Star of India, for in his death was lost the secret of that marvelous compound, The Essence of Advertisement.

Among the scanty effects left by the deceased was a yellow, ragged slip of paper, bearing the following memorandum:

Hemp-seed — makes men dream dreams. Opium — ditto. Absinthe — certain (different) effects. There ought to be — may be — plant — mineral — somewhere (try India) which — eaten — tasted — smelt — will incite men — women — to spend money — lavishly — heedlessly. If can find this plant — mineral — can mix with rose — violet — perfume — sprinkle in stores — patrons smell — buy heavily — freely — advertisement.

Here the writing ended, torn away. Copeland reflected. Was The Essence of Advertisement the materialized thoughts of men of advertising genius, or something quite different, and though less wonderful and mysterious, not less effective and valuable?



A Man and a Mermaid.*

BY W. GEORGE GRIBBLE.



R. JOHN FRANKLIN HIGGINSON, senior partner of the firm of Higginson & Rush, lay stretched at ease in his deck chair on a transatlantic liner. It was a perfectly calm night, and the sea was murmuring softly in response to the full light of the moon, which was making the night eloquent. Mr. Higginson had drawn his chair to a secluded corner of the lower deck where he was closer to the water and unsheltered from the heavens. He had dined full and well, and the fragrance of his cigar was deeply satisfying. He looked out over the silver world of water, and sighed slightly, as if troubled by the exceeding beauty of the universe.

The moonlight seemed to penetrate into his brain and there to discover something which had for years been buried under a mass of legal matter, deep in the recesses of his mind. Then something stirred, took form, and turned out to be a couplet of poetry:

"Ah, moon of my delight — that knows no wane,
The moon of heaven is rising once again!"

Mr. Higginson smiled. Where had he heard that? Then he remembered; it was at a musicale last winter, where some one had sung the lines just as he had entered the room. He flicked a long cone of ashes from his cigar and lost himself in further reflections. What should there be about a mere sequence of words to stir one's feelings! Poetry, as such, was all nonsense; — Higginson had come to that conclusion long ago; therefore, he reasoned, it could only be that it aroused memories of some former sensations, in the same way as might a perfume or a few bars of music. Presently another line of verse came pushing its way to the top of his dome

* Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

* The writer of this story received a cash prize of \$150 in THE BLACK CAT story contest ending October 12, 1904.

of consciousness (Mr. Higginson, be it said, believed somewhat in the psychology of Herbart), "Where are the flowers of yesterday?" half murmured Mr. Higginson. He remembered perfectly, and with somewhat of a twinge of memory, the occasion of his first hearing these lines. They were introduced by Mr. Sothern in "If I were King!", and when they first fell upon the ears of Mr. Higginson, they served as a reminder that on the previous day he had neglected to send flowers to a certain lady.

From such distressing memories Mr. Higginson turned to wider and less personal thoughts, prompted by the beauty of the night. How luminous the water seemed to-night! It must be full of those phosphorescent animalcula Mr. Higginson had read about.

As he tipped off some more ashes from his cigar daintily with his little finger, he noticed how the ruby in his ring flashed in the moonlight. It was a handsome "pigeon-blood" ruby of considerable value. For a while Mr. Higginson watched the strange light it emitted under the rays of the moon.

From this musing Mr. Higginson's attention was again drawn to the water by something moving near the ship. Probably some larger species of fish, he mused, possibly — as there was a white flash — possibly even a porpoise. Then he remembered that porpoises come only in schools and leap out of the water. Mr. Higginson idly wondered at the swirling luminous water. Suddenly he stared below him. Strange! he thought, that might have been a white arm! He would have liked to have asked a sailor the meaning of such phenomena, but there seemed no one about; it was evidently late, as the passengers had all turned in.

Again came a white flash in the moonlight. Then a streak of whiteness, splashing and flashing in the shimmering water. Mr. Higginson gazed spellbound; sometimes nearer, sometimes farther off, whatever it was it kept well up with the steamer. Mr. Higginson felt a little ripple creep down his spine. Suppose it should be —! The thought was too unpleasant — besides, it was obviously alive and moving. Now it was quite close in, — and beyond a doubt, it had white feelers, which looked and moved like arms. Mr. Higginson's brain swam. Pictures by Böcklin came dancing before his mental vision. Then he shuddered, for there, in the moonlight, by the boat's side, swam a woman, beautifully nude!

What was he to do! Could it be some demented passenger? The French lady had seemed to him somewhat unbalanced. Then, he had heard of somnambulism. Great Scott! And he would be required as a witness in case anything happened! In a turmoil of emotions Mr. Higginson waved to the lady. She came nearer somewhat cautiously. He deemed it best to humor her and temporize, as she seemed such an excellent swimmer, hoping for help to appear meanwhile. A brilliant idea presented itself to Mr. Higginson.

"I suppose you are a mermaid?" he called, very softly. He heard only what sounded like a faint laugh, while the lady, as Mr. Higginson expressed to himself, moved with a gallic abandon through the water. Perhaps she didn't understand English. "*Vous-êtes une petite nymphe, n'est-ce pas?*" he called again, with a sympathetic side gesture, suggestive of aquatic origin. This time he heard an unmistakable and impudent little giggle.

Mr. Higginson tried another tack.

"I wish I were down there with you!" he said as enviously as he could — then he stopped and blushed as he remembered the full significance of his remark. He only hoped no one had heard him!

"Do you sing?—*Chantez-vous?*" he called again, hoping she would throw discretion to the winds in her desire to act out the part of a Lorelei, and thus attract the attention of the watch. This time his question was answered. Soft, like silver cadences, came the most exquisite singing Mr. Higginson had ever heard. He could not tell the words, but it sounded like "*Weia-Wala, Wala-Weia!*" repeated in ever changing modulations. The nearest approach to it he had heard was a part of that otherwise sadly muddled opera "*Das Rheingold.*"

Like a sigh the singing ended, and Mr. Higginson scarcely yet breathed, afraid to lose a note of it. A laugh rippled up to him. There below him was the lady whose singing was only matched by her swimming.

Mr. Higginson once more became embarrassed at the propinquity of her gleaming body, but she seemed honestly and frankly unashamed. Her hair glistened like gold and silver in the moonlight, while one arm moved out of the water and in with scarcely a

ripple. She beckoned and smiled at him radiantly, and he saw she was no passenger.

"What do you want?" he asked, almost in a whisper. She made a gesture with one hand and the little finger of the other. He looked at his hand and saw the ruby shining there. He looked at her doubtfully. She made a pleading gesture and gazed at him so fully, that as in a dream he took off his ring and dropped it into the ocean. She caught it deftly as it flashed into the water and pressed it to her lips. "Thank you! thank you!" she exclaimed in perfect English.

"So you can speak English?" he queried. "Yes," she replied, and her voice sounded like a ripple of water. "I can speak any language once I have touched to my lips something belonging to one who speaks it." Mr. Higginson's mind ran over cases he had heard of witnesses who could only speak under the spell of a golden coin. "She might have asked for my handkerchief or my necktie," he thought to himself a little ruefully, but aloud he said, "Who are you?"

"You wouldn't believe me" she laughed.

"Not really!" he exclaimed, with a vague shudder. She nodded, and splashed the water up to him with a little laugh.

"Where do you live?" he asked.

"Do not move and I will tell you, as you have been so kind to me." And, softly splashing by the vessel's side, she told him the following, half singing in a curious, fascinating rhythm:

"My name is Pelagia, and I was born in a sea-shell in a cave of corals, many miles below the surface. Down there is a world of beings of all sorts — mermaids like me, mermen, oyster maidens, which grow from pearls; mothers-of-pearl, which are the mothers of the oyster maidens; coral dwarfs, which never come to the surface; and Sea Ancients, which are old men, descendants, they say, of the God Neptune. We have our laws and we are bound to keep them. One of them is that we may only appear once in our lives to human beings."

Mr. Higginson felt a subtle glow of satisfaction at these words.

"So you are having your night out?" he ventured. But she ignored his remark by diving under the water. When she came up she continued: "Have you ever heard of Undine?" He

remembered the name vaguely, but could not recall her story. "Well," she went on, "You should read it, for it is quite true. A recollection flashed through his mind. "Do you mean to say that that old story of mermaids not having souls, but being able to acquire them through human love, is true?" She nodded her head half sadly. "That is why we are allowed to show ourselves to a human being once in our lives." "And do you generally choose an ocean-liner?" he asked, thinking mermaids must be developing a sense for business. "Not generally," she replied, "mostly it is sailors or fishermen. But do you remember, last year, hearing of a very rich man who was lost at sea?" Mr. Higginson remembered perfectly — a very wealthy Wall Street broker who had thrown himself overboard from a transatlantic steamer. "Yes," he said, "I remember very distinctly." "Well, he is married to one of my friends," she said, with a mischievous glance that made Mr. Higginson shiver. "I hope he's happy!" he managed to say in a conventional tone. "Oh, perfectly!" she replied, coolly, "he gave her a most lovely engagement ring, almost as handsome as this one!" Mr. Higginson turned icy cold. "But," he choked, and his voice sounded strange, "that is not an engagement ring!" She sent out a ripple of laughter and splashed the water merrily, "Oh, yes, it is!" "And do you mean to say that I am affianced to you?" gasped Mr. Higginson. "By the laws of our realm you are bound to me!" she said, tossing her golden hair in the spray. "But I know nothing of your laws. By our laws — by the laws of Great Britain and the law of the United States — I am not bound to you or any woman!" His tone was almost defiant. "But, Sweetheart mine!" she laughed, "don't you see you are not in any one of those countries, but on the ocean, and should you not be tied by the law of the realm you are in?" An awful logic in her remark struck him speechless with horror. "Besides," she resumed reflectively, gazing at the ring, "you ought to be glad to have me. Am I not beautiful?" and with naïve frankness she half lifted herself on a little wave and clasped her hands behind her head, gazing up at him in a way to make him giddy and set his heart racing wildly. In truth she was gloriously beautiful! His antipathy for her seemed to melt into the moonlight.

"But I know nothing of your language, your customs, your laws," he expostulated weakly.

"You could go to school," she whispered, with a glance that made his heart stand still with ecstasy.

"School!" he said. "What school? Have you schools down there?"

"Of course!" and she smiled. "We have a school of porpoises which you might attend. That is where the rich man went to." There was a flash of merriment in her eyes, which wholly escaped him. He was bending over, devouring her beauty with his eyes. She stretched up her arms to him. "When," he whispered, "when shall I come?"

A yearning look crept into her face and her mouth seemed formed as if for an answer — or a kiss. His elbow and one foot were on the taffrail, when he was seized from behind with a grip of iron and forced backwards, while a gruff voice said in his ear:

"It's against the Cap'n's orders to jump overboard."

Mr. Higginson started, stared, and walked slowly to his state-room.





Cherry Blossom
Size, 8 x 10½ inches

This Jolly Pair

represents two of the 150 Clever Pictures designed by the artist of The Black Cat, and which for the next 60 days may be secured under the following Half Price combination offer.

There are 870 sets left. When these are gone we cannot furnish a set at any price, as this is the last edition.

For Your Own

or your friend's Winter Den or Summer Camp, Cozy Corner, Library, Club Room or Nursery, these attractive creations are "very much all right." They are on paper 8 x 10½ inches, suitable for framing and make ideal Card Party Prizes. The collection also includes The Minstrel, The Football Hero, The Drummer, The Black Butterfly, The Kindergarten, etc., and many Decorative Tail Pieces and Initials. The price is one dollar a set, but for 60 days more they will be furnished with a year's subscription to The Black Cat, at *exactly half price*, that is, a full year's subscription to The Black Cat and a complete set of the pictures, both postpaid, for 75 cents, instead of \$1.50.

The Shortstory Publishing Company
Boston, Mass.



Troubadour
Size, 8 x 10½ inches

Prize Pets Worth Having

Irresistible Individuals, Happy Couples, Jolly Groups, besides scores of decorative Tail Pieces and picturesque Alphabets, make up the set of more than 150 pictures designed by the artist of The Black Cat. They are photo-engraved, suitable for framing, eight by ten and a half inches. Only 870 sets remain, and whoever secures a set under the sixty days combination offer printed on the following page secures a Prize that money cannot duplicate later on, as this is the last edition.



The entire set forms an array of Cat Cleverness that will make any friend happy. The Pictures may be sent to one address and the subscription to The Black Cat to another, we paying postage in each case.

The House That Jill Built.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



It came gyrating around the corner on its rim, carried along by a dusty gust of April wind, and as it swerved by me, seemingly with the instinct of a live thing seeking to get out of my way, I made a grab for the little old derby and succeeded in gaining a squashed hold upon it. As I was knocking some of the dust from the crown its owner came around the corner, whipt along by a second dusty gust of weather, and espying the hat safe in my hands he hurried forward with an expression compounded of vexation and relief.

"Ah!" he cried, coming to a dramatic pause before me:

'The man that will not chase another's hat
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.'"

Giving the derby a final brush around its rim, I was about to return it to its ingenuous owner when a large placard pasted inside the crown caught my eye and, before I was aware of the fact, I had read the following singular sentence:

"Thou shalt not take unto thee for a wife a woman who invents things."

I looked up in astonishment and, catching the little man's eye fastened upon me, murmured an apology.

"Don't mention it, sir. It's big print and you could scarcely help noticing it. Yes, my friend, grapple this advice to heart: Beware of the woman who invents things." He received his hat, placed it on his head, and then fell into step beside me. "Does your wife invent things?" he asked.

"I am not married," I explained.

He gave me a look of incredulous wonder, that ran into envy. "That's so, all men aren't married," he reflected. Then he

* Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

looked up and added, "Ah, well, you're young yet, and many things can happen to you before you die."

"Yes," I nodded, at a loss just how to take my new-found companion.

"Have you ever heard of Kant?" he asked.

"The great German philosopher?"

"Yes. Well, I believe he takes as the starting point of his immortal philosophy the dictum, *I am*. Now, I add a third word, and start off with, *I am married*, and necessarily I arrive at a quite different philosophy of things."

"Ah," I smiled.

"Quite different! But I will not bother you with any dissertation on things as they seem: I wish merely to advise you never to marry a woman who invents things."

"You have married such a lady—unfortunately?" I sympathized.

"Three."

I stared incredulously, then severely.

"Don't mistake me!" he exclaimed: "I am not a bigamist. My first wife was scalded to death by an ingenious water-heater which she had all but perfected. My second wife was asphyxiated by her wonderful automatic gas hair-curler. My present wife—" he did not finish his sentence but removing his hat, gazed at the placard pasted in the crown, and then, taking out his handkerchief, dusted the derby thoughtfully.

It was the noon hour, and as we were opposite a café I invited him in to lunch.

"You seem not to have taken your own advice," I remarked over the oysters.

"No, not yet. But if circumstances are such that I shall ever again marry, I assure you I shall act with cumulative wisdom."

"For the lady's sake, let us hope that nothing unpleasant will happen," I said.

He shook his head as he dipped an oyster into his sauce. "I do not wish to see any harm befall her, but I fear if she continues to live in the house that Jill built something unhappy will come of it."

"The house that Jill built?"

He gave me the look of a child that thinks everyone must know what it is talking about.

"Yes, the house that Jill built."

"And Jill?"

"Why, she's my wife! She built the house herself. That is, she invented it and had it built after her own designs. She certainly is a genius," he added, with a faint glow of pride.

"A woman invent a whole dwelling house!" I exclaimed. "I'd like to see it."

"Yes, Jill invented it all herself, and it's got Patent Applied For stamped over the entrance. She is somewhere in the city now, starting a company. I saw her on the street, but she was too busy to stop. Then my hat blew off and I had to follow."

There was a naïveté about the man that disarmed contempt, and when he invited me to come out some evening and see the house that Jill had built I gladly accepted his invitation.

I took a Saturday evening for my purpose and found the address after a single inquiry of a suburban urchin, who volunteered the information that Mr. Patent Applied For lived at the address, as that was the "name" over the door. The house stood apart at the end of the street, and while of only a story-and-a-half, it was substantially built and architecturally pleasing.

I found my late acquaintance at home, and he greeted me in an enthusiastic yet subdued manner. "Hush!" he whispered. "Jill is in her room thinking, and we mustn't be noisy!" He spoke as if we were boys, or rather as if his wife were a dynamite cap that would burst with the slightest jar. "See," he said, directing my eyes every way at once by a sweeping motion of his hands, "'tis a very pretty interior, and one could hardly believe that such an artistic place is fire-proof, flood-proof, earthquake-proof, lightning-proof, and" — he sunk his voice to a back-stair whisper — tax-proof!"

"Tax-proof!" I exclaimed. "You don't say?"

"I do! That is, Jill says so, and while she hasn't explained to me just how it is tax-proof, she has promised to do so, and when she does I'll show you."

It was indeed a rather pretty interior for a house so protected against the violences of nature, and my host remained silent while

I admired the tasteful entry-way. Finally, he could contain himself no longer, and exclaimed: "You must see all over the house. It's small, but it's a model of comfort, convenience and security! That is," he added hastily, "see everywhere but in Jill's room. I never was in there!"

My interest and curiosity were now thoroughly aroused and I followed the little man about, delighted with his delight, which seemed no longer dashed by any regret at having an inventive genius for a wife, and satisfied in my own mind that "Jill" had ability of no common order.

I found the house to be protected from lightning by a number of highly improved telescopic rods; built with a water-tight double flooring; arteried with pipes that in case of fire would automatically fill the building with a fire-extinguishing gas; and the whole remarkable structure set upon powerful sleeping-car springs that would distribute and make harmless the violent shock of an earthquake or an explosion.

"You should hear Jill talk!" the man exclaimed. "She'd tell you how folks sit in patented chairs at patented tables and read patent journals by patented lights, yet are so unenlightened as to live in any kind of a house, while, if there is one thing in the world important enough to be brought to a state of patentable perfection, it is the home. Why, after hearing her talk on the subject for just five minutes, a friend of mine said that he felt like a primordial man living in a cave."

"You should be proud of your wife," I assured him; "and instead of fearing that something serious will result from her inventions, rather feel yourself doubly secure while sheltered behind the bright shield of her practical genius."

"It's the tax-proof-cyclone-proof arrangement that worries me," he explained. "She won't show me how it is worked, and I've pressed every button I can find and got myself in a world of trouble, but I can't come across that tax-cyclone button. I wonder what would happen if I should discover it and press it," he mused.

"You might prefer to pay taxes," I laughed.

He shook his head in a kind of good-naturedly ill-nature and I saw his eyes roam around as in search of some secret button. As we passed the third door on the left of the hallway, he paused

and whispered, "That is it! That is Jill's room! She's in there thinking now, and she never comes out till some bright idea comes out with her." He stooped and applied his eye to the key-hole, then suddenly straightened up. "Why, she's gone out! I say, let's hunt together for that cyclone-tax button."

I waved aside the astonishing proposition. "You go first," I laughed, "and I won't follow. Your wife's business may be yours, but it's no part mine."

"You're right," he assented. "Something unpleasant might happen and then I'd be sorry for having got you into trouble. Come, I'll show you the Patent Applied For over the door, and I guess you'll just have time to get the next car back to the city."

As I walked down the road in the dusk meditating on the House that Jill built and its strange inmates, I suddenly began to doubt the reality of Jill. Perhaps the little man was himself the inventor of the patented house and had fabricated "Jill" as an advertising scheme, or else as a kind of silent partner on whom he might shift any unpleasant responsibilities. Or, perhaps, too close application to his invention had unbalanced him and given rise to this queer hallucination.

Yet the man was as guileless as a boy of ten, with none of the cunning of insanity, and, wondering if the patented house might not prove a pretty big thing after all, I paused and looked back, a little vain of my experience.

Had I found myself suddenly on the other side of the earth I could not have been more astonished. *The House that Jill built was gone!*

A moment later I was running breathlessly back down the road. Once I came to a standstill and hesitated mentally. Had there been any such place as the house that Jill built? Might I not have merely imagined it? Which of our experiences is so vivid as not under certain conditions to seem a dream — a fantastic shadow thrown upon some inner consciousness? But my feet seemed to scorn the wild doubt in my brain and resumed their race down the road.

Bringing up directly before the plot of ground where the house that Jill built had been standing only a few moments before, I found merely a stretch of uncared-for lawn.

I stared before me in deepening wonder, then wheeled about, morbidly fearful lest the house, like some unpleasant dead thing, was hiding at my back. But the house that Jill built was indeed gone! A kind of painful humor seized me and I laughed queerly. "He's pressed the tax-button, I guess!"

Suddenly I was conscious of voices. They seemed to come from nowhere, indistinct at first, but as I listened attentively they soon resolved into the sound of a dispute.

"You did!" "I did not!" "You did! How dare you dispute Me!"

"But, my love, I did not! I was under the table when I butted my head against the button."

"What were you doing under the table?"

"My love, it would not avail me to lie, and though it would I could not do so gracefully in your presence. I was hunting for the tax-cyclone button."

"You found it!"

"Yes, my love!" There was a note of humiliated triumph in the familiar voice. "But had I known you were in the house, I would not have entered your room unbidden."

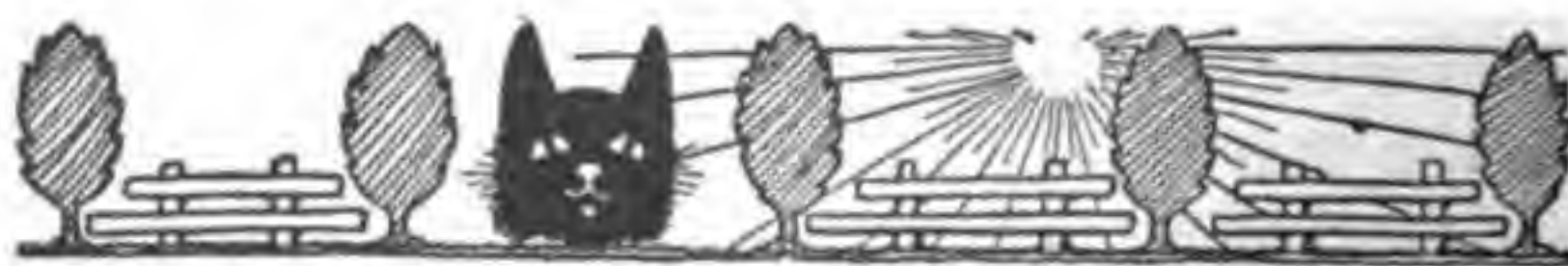
"Stand aside!"

I had but a moment longer to wonder from whence the voices came, then my brain seemed to reel as the center of the lawn before me stirred and out of the earth, lighted by a score of incandescent lights and with all its shades open, arose the House that Jill built.

Stealing around to the side of the structure I saw my late host standing humbly in the presence of a magnificent red-haired woman, fully six feet in stature.

"The next time, sir, that you let this house into the cyclone cellar, I shall shut you in with it till I plant another lawn on the roof. Be warned in time!"

With a fixed mental picture of the dramatic scene, and no longer doubting the reality of "Jill," I turned and strode away.



The Mansion of Forgetfulness.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



OUR months after the salt waves had laid at his feet the cold form of his Love, came the news that Herbert Munson was the possessor of a startling secret. He had, it was stated, discovered a Purple Ray that would wither and destroy certain human cells of memory without injury or danger to neighboring cells. This rumor was followed by the still more amazing report that Munson had erected the Mansion of Forgetfulness, to which all who would free their minds of a hopeless passion might repair, and in one brief hour, *forget*.

And, sure enough, here they came—those who loved not wisely but too well, those who loved deeply but hopelessly, and those who loved the Dead and could endure their grief no longer—and the Purple Ray “plucked from the memory its rooted sorrow” and they went forth from the Mansion of Forgetfulness unscarred and fancy-free.

Yet he who showed others how to forget would not himself forget. It was agony to know that she was dead, and he would never see her face again, yet he shrank from forgetfulness as the soul shrinks from oblivion. Try as he would, he could not drag himself from the haunted halls of memory, though he remembered that the world without was wonderfully fair, and other women, perhaps as lovely as she, were waiting there to love and be loved. No! Let others forget, he would not! Not that he lived in hope, for had he not kissed the salt foam from her dead face? But that memory was all that remained of a Love who was no more.

He watched them come and go—watched the many, ah, too many, pilgrims arrive with sorrowful, love-haunted faces, but

* Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

depart with unconcerned, care-free looks, and at times he feared that his philanthropy was a sacrilege. There seemed something unholy in this sudden transmutation of grief into gladness — this swift thrusting aside of the tragic presence of sorrow — yet they had chosen of their own free will to forget a hopeless passion, and they could now return whence they came and love again, more wisely if less deeply.

Some came, thinking to blot out other memories than that of a hopeless love — memories of sin and crime — but the Purple Ray would not be thwarted to such base purposes, and they left, abashed and disappointed.

It was in winter, when the snow was changed to crystal as it fell upon the walls and cornices of the beautiful marble edifice, or piled itself in drifts of sifted diamonds against the stained glass windows, when a lady came alone across the vales and entered the broad gateway of the Mansion of Forgetfulness.

Something in her manner — perhaps her agitated hesitation at the portals — moved the master to accost her.

“Kind friend,” he said, “were it not better to remember what you now seek to forget?” As he spoke he drew closer about his face the cowl he wore to conceal his identity from the merely curious.

A sigh was the only immediate answer, as the pilgrim leaned wearily against a marble pillar. Then came the low spoken words:

“Perhaps I may only half forget. I would remember, yet not remember so acutely.”

“No, you will wholly forget. The Purple Ray is oblivion itself.”

“Ah, well, better I kill these painful memories than break my heart!”

“Then, if it must be so, enter and forget.”

“Show me the way and let me go quickly,” was the plea of the veiled lady. “I have come far, and the worst is only a few steps farther on.”

“Come, then!” and the master led the way to the room of the Purple Ray.

An hour passed, when the door was opened and the veiled

visitor came forth and descended the broad stairway. She moved quickly and lightly, and at the foot of the stairs she laughed musically as she again met the master.

"Have you forgotten?" he asked.

"Forgotten! I know that I have forgotten something, else why am I here, yet I do not know what I have forgotten."

"So they all say!"

A flush of rosy light shone from a slender window overhead, haloing the pilgrim like a saint.

"How beautiful everything is!" she exclaimed. "Why do I wear this veil? I will no longer!"

So saying, she loosened it, disclosing a face young and exquisitely fair. The man shrank back as if pierced by a bolt.

"My God, it is her spirit!" he gasped.

"No, no!" protested the visitor. "I am not a spirit, and I fear I am too, too human."

"You are Morella!" whispered the man, staring before him like one peering through intense darkness.

"I am. Who are you that you ask?"

"Morella! I thought you dead! I kissed you for dead and then the waves swept me away and I saw you no more."

"Some fishermen once found me on a sandy beach, where they said I had fainted. Who are you?"

The man drew back his cowl. "Look!" There was no light of recognition in the other's eyes. "My God! the Ray has blotted out all memory!"

"Pray tell me what you mean, and let me go," came the passionless words.

A groan was the only reply, and the man hid his face in his hands.

"You seem to know what I have forgotten. Has it aught to do with you?"

"O Morella, it were better that I thought you dead than to know that you have forgotten! Do you not recall our betrothal? See, you have the ring upon your hand! Does it not awaken one recollection of other days?"

The girl gazed blankly at the ring on her hand, and shook her head.

"Has the Ray blotted out every fair memory! Have you returned to life only to forget! Try to think, dearest: Do you not remember that day in Naples when we pledged eternal love for one another?"

"I remember no betrothal." A deep look of pity came into the speaker's eyes when she saw the pain her words had caused. "If remembrance is so sad, why do you not also forget?"

"My love!" he groaned, "you are making the world darker to me than to dying eyes! You ask me to forget! You!"

"You forget that I have forgotten."

The man groaned in utter anguish.

As she turned to go he stayed her by a gentle touch. "*Wait here while I, too, go and kill that memory!*"

He dragged himself up the broad stairway, looking back once when he had reached the landing, then turned and staggered towards the room of the Purple Ray.



The Black Cat

A Monthly Magazine of Original Short Stories.

Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vol. XII., No. 8.
Whole No., 140.

MAY, 1907.

5 cents a copy.
50 cents a year.

Entered at the Post-Office at Boston, Mass., as second-class matter.

THE BLACK CAT is devoted exclusively to original, unusual, fascinating stories—every number is complete in itself. It publishes no serials, translations, borrowings, or stealings. It pays nothing for the name or reputation of a writer, but the highest price on record for *Stories that are Stories*, and it pays not according to length, but according to strength. To receive attention, manuscripts must be sent unrolled, fully prepaid, and accompanied by addressed and stamped envelope for return. All MSS. are received and returned at their writers' risk.

CAUTION.—*The entire contents of THE BLACK CAT are protected by copyright, and publishers everywhere are cautioned against reproducing any of the stories, either wholly or in part.*

Itself.*

BY EDGAR MAYHEW BACON.



HE Missouri was in flood. To use a common financial phrase, there was a slump in real estate, and several thousand acres of well-connected, arable land had abandoned their ancient riparian rights and degenerated into mere yellow mud, which swept by Glasgow and Booneville at the rate of fifty miles an hour. Between Arrow Rock and Lisbon the stream, that had spread out below the islands, tried to swing at racing speed into its narrowing channel, swirling against the curving bank with mad impetuosity,—tearing, grinding, and overflowing it.

When the wall of soapy froth that marked the edge of the flood began to fill the windows and doorway of Mike Cassedy's house, the family thought it time to go. Their exodus was accompanied with loud bewailings, led by Jane Cassedy, the teamster's wife, while Ellen, Janey and Mamie Cassedy chimed in according to their ability. Gramma McCrea, a victim to rheumatism, hobbled out in tearful silence, devoutly crossing herself when the little band of homeless refugees reached the safer ground of the bluff. They were not alone in their flight. When they halted, the forlorn

* Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

family found themselves in the midst of equally unfortunate neighbors, a circumstance which went far to mitigate the severity of their affliction.

Mrs. Toone was there, with her six children, each one redder-eyed than the others, and Mrs. O'Grady lamented in concert with Mrs. Donelly and the Widow Daly. The Kearnses, being a thrifty race, had already begun to build a shack to cover them, and the O'Brians, in view of their royal blood, actually aspired to nothing less than a two-roomed cabin, built from wreckage carried up from the shore.

About three o'clock in the afternoon, after rocking for some time upon its foundations, the Cassedy house floated off. It careened till it struck the only unshaken building in the neighborhood, the little stone church of St. Ann. The last the tearful family saw of their late home, it was being whirled away in fragments on the face of the waters.

Mike Cassedy had no idea of joining in the idle lamentations of the women, nor the aimless speculations of most of the men. Having saved his team and wagon, he pursued a work of salvage till twilight settled over land and flood, the result of his toil being a pile of lumber, motley in its variety, but quite sufficient to form a shelter that vied with the camp of the Kearnses, or the gypsy palace of the O'Brians.

When night covered the turgid waters of the Missouri, and the last keener on the bluff forgot her wailing in troubled sleep, a strange thing occurred on the sunken neck of land where the Cassedy house had stood. Mistress McCrea, being blessed with the faculty of dreaming true when important things were coming to pass, saw in her slumbers a brave, new house riding the flood. It stranded on the point, the lower angle of the front grinding first upon the submerged bar, and then, as it righted, gradually dragged more and more to the east, till at last it settled solidly within twenty paces of the spot where the old house had stood.

With the first peep of day Ellen, Tessie and Mamie were awake and out of doors. To the edge of the bluff they went, to discover what they could of novelty. In five minutes they were back, breathless with excitement, and pouring an astonishing tale into the credulous ears of the grandmother.

"A new house, bigger an' better'n oun," explained Tessie.

"An' it's got paint on it!" supplemented the other sisters, shrilly exultant that this important item of news, the delivery of which would almost outweigh the glory of the first announcement, should have been omitted by the nimble-tongued Tessie.

Gramma showed no astonishment but, rising, took her cane without a word, and being already dressed, hobbled slowly to the point of observation, while her newly awakened daughter-in-law, still rubbing the sleep from her eyes, made frantic haste to put on such clothes as decency demanded before facing the gaze of early rising neighbors. Mike Cassedy, being stiff and sore from yesterday's exertions, was longer in getting his faculties in hand, poor man; but at last he, too, joined the little procession, and after all Gramma McCrea arrived last at the bluff.

"Did iver annywan see th' loike?" Mrs. Cassedy's voice was reduced almost to a whisper in the face of what she made no doubt was a miraculous dispensation of Providence.

"Yis, yis, 'tis jest as I saw it," Gramma repeated. "'Tis jest as I saw it last night in me drame."

"What's that yere sayin'?" asked Mrs. Cassedy.

"Gramma dramed it," whispered the children to each other, while Mike, who was seldom known to speak unless he had something of importance to say, and seldom then till the occasion was passed, turned his serious big face inquiringly toward the wise woman.

"Aye;" repeated Gramma. "'Deed I dramed it while ye were all slapin', not long from midnight. I saw it come down on the strame and shtrand thayer, where it is now, an' that I'll take oat' to."

It was not long before the refugee settlement on the bluff had learned that Mike Cassedy's family were favored of Heaven to the extent of having a better house in the place of the one they had lost, and to add to the excitement caused by this astonishing news, word was solemnly passed that Mistress McCrea had dramed it.

"She's a wonderful woman, that."

"Aye. She has the second sight."

"Seein' she dramed it, wouldn't the house belong to her, now?"

“Whisht. What differ does it make? Wouldn't she have a home anyhow? Mike Cassedy has been good to th' ould woman, an' whether she was in her own house or his, I warrant she'll never know any odds.”

It was a nice point to raise, this question of ownership in a house that had come unincumbered by title-deed, lease, mortgage, or other document wherewith properties are wont to be trammelled, all the world over. Former proprietor there seemed to have been none. Advised by the good priest, Father Joseph, Cassedy sought diligently to discover whence the house had come; but although his inquiries extended for thirty miles up the river, and descriptions of the dwelling were inserted in several papers between Booneville and Lexington, no trace of an owner could be found.

So it came to pass that by the time the flood had entirely subsided and the mud which occupied the site of the Cassedys' garden had dried so that one could reach the new house by walking, the exiled family returned to an enlarged and improved domain, and respectful acquaintances were careful to speak of it as Mistress McCrea's house.

Blessed be little. Even in the haste of their exodus the Cassedys had been able to take with them the most sacred of their household gods, and as for furniture, they could afford to lose the few simple old pieces they had possessed, in view of the fact that the new dwelling contained twice as much, and that of a much better quality.

The building was not quite in the position desired, but with the aid of his team, and the willing assistance of his neighbors, Cassedy succeeded in jacking it about till he got it in the right place. When the family, amid the congratulations of their friends and to their own great satisfaction, took formal possession, and the careful Cassedy with his team drew back the heterogeneous lot of lumber that had sheltered them on the hill, and built with it a fence that was the envy of the neighborhood, people even began to whisper that the Cassedys were getting up in the world, and Father Joseph suggested that a thank-offering would be most suitably bestowed upon the parish of Saint Ann.

But how approach, or by what reference preface, the crowning discovery that filled to overflowing the cup of the delighted

Cassedys? The statement that the furniture of the new house doubled in extent and value that of the old one, is short of the whole truth. In one of the four bedrooms (no other house upon Fiddler's Neck had more than two) there was a heavy black walnut bedstead, with springs and mattress reasonably dry, in spite of the soaking that the lower floor of the house had sustained. The headboard of the bed was high and ornately decorated with mouldings, while the sides were of unusual thickness. It was altogether a massive piece of furniture, such as a rich man might own, but entirely above the ordinary aspirations of people like the Cassedys. In the very centre of the high headboard was a medallion or shield in high relief, and upon it, swinging from a small hook, hung a picture the like of which had never before been seen on Fiddler's Neck. A young woman, with auburn hair, blue eyes piously raised to Heaven, and delicate hands clasped in uninterrupted devotion, occupied a frame of Florentine gold, shaped to form a cross. It is no wonder that the awestruck family regarded this miniature and its setting with superstitious joy. To their simple minds it was at once the symbol and the flower of their new fortunes.

For days the returning neighbors were admitted to view the precious thing. With but one dissenting voice, they pronounced it the likeness of a saint, and when Father Joseph had added his approval to the general verdict, the matter was deemed to be settled beyond dispute. It was even whispered that Saint Ann herself had come to take the Cassedys under her special protection, and a halo of sanctity began to gather about the teamster's house. It cost him something, to be sure, as dignities and reputation are apt to cost. There could be no doubt that one so favored should do more for the church than could be expected from his less fortunate neighbors. Father Joseph was certainly just in advancing this view, and in fairness to Mike Cassedy it should be said that he entirely fell in with it, and labored early and late to support his new dignities. Business increased with him; in place of two horses, within the year he had six, and two strong, sober lads were employed as helpers; so that in time he became the most prosperous man in the community.

In the grand new bedroom, in the magnificent bed, under the

blessed picture, they put Gramma McCrea. An amiable dispute between the mother and daughter had been settled by the unusual utterance of a word from Mike.

"Y'r mother'll take that room, who else?" Who else, indeed. The whole family agreeing that it was her right, not only because she had "dramed it," but by reason of her advanced years, her rheumatic pains, and her greatly loved personality, the old woman was affectionately installed in the best chamber.

"'Deed, my dear," she said to her daughter, "Ye are all too good to th' useless ould 'ooman. I'd be better plazed if yerself and Mike, good, honest man, wud slape in it."

"Whist, an' don't be callin' yerself names," answered Mrs. Cassedy, bustling about in pretence of tidying the already immaculate premises. "What'd me an' Mike fale like, slapin' in the grand bed, an' you on straw. I'd take shame to do it. We're young yet, and our bones rest aisy wherever we are."

The first night that Gramma McCrea slept in the big bed she painfully climbed to her knees at the head of the mattress, and reaching up, touched the picture with thin, trembling fingers. Then she said her prayers and signed the cross, feeling safe and rich as she had never before felt in all her long, toil-filled life. Was not "Itself" watching over her?

The exposure at the time of the flood had greatly increased Gramma's rheumatism. When she first was established in the great bed, under the blessed protection of "Itself," she was nearly doubled with pain, and even her pious thanksgiving and petitions to Heaven were punctuated with groans and sighs. Now a miracle, or what bore strong external resemblance to one, gave the Cassedy family and their neighbors fresh occasion to marvel. The first twenty-four hours in the bed were marked by a decided improvement in Mistress McCrea's condition. At the end of the second day she arose, declaring that her pains had left her, and offered to help her daughter with the housework. After the third night — but this is a secret between Gramma and her youngest grandchild — she astonished Mamie by challenging her to a contest at rope-skipping, and the agility displayed by the rejuvenated old woman could only be equalled by the astonishment of the child, or by her own subsequent contrition. The details of Gramma's

recovery, the rope-skipping episode alone omitted, soon became public property. It may be that doubters would have arisen to question the truth of the story, had not Gramma been seen frequently without her cane, a living witness to the supernatural virtue of "Itself."

Janey Mack, lame from her birth, was living in the next house but one from the Cassedy home when these things occurred, and after many consultations her mother made bold to ask Gramma McCrea might Janey sleep one night in the great bed.

"Not wan night, but a wake if 'twill do her anny good," was the hearty reply. "I'll not be sayin' that 'Itself' will cure her, but 'twill be no harm to thry. I'm that young meself now that I cud slape on the flure and not be the worse."

Janey's uncle, the acknowledged skeptic of Fiddler's Point, made great sport of the "shuperstition of thim wimmin"; but when, at the end of a week, Janey walked out of the Cassedy's house without her crutches, he fairly turned tail and went up to Kansas City to look for a job that he heard was waiting for him there.

Father Joseph had been away during the time occupied by these miraculous cures. On his return to Fiddler's Point he found the settlement in an uproar.

"What's this they tell me about miracles being worked in your house?" he asked Mike. There was a suggestion of sternness in the good priest's voice, for to him this was altogether a serious matter, to be reported to his superiors in the church in any event, to be investigated solemnly, and if the work of error, to be sternly suppressed.

"They tell me that the picture has been curing Mistress McCrea and Janey Mack," he specified.

"Mike twisted the whip he had in his hands, and made several efforts before the machinery of his jaws could frame a reply.

"They do be sayin' so," he finally admitted.

"What do *you* say?" pressed the clergyman.

"They're both walkin';" came the slow answer.

There being nothing further to be elicited from Mike, Father Joseph went to see the late sufferers, and found both active, as reported. Still puzzled and anxious, not willing to let error slip

into his fold unchallenged, nor yet content to be himself an obstacle to what might be really the goodness of Heaven, the careful priest startled the Cassedys with a request. He had been troubled for years with an annoying malady of the nerves, which caused the left side of his face to twitch. Would the family permit him to sleep in the wonderful bed?

He had not meant to make this experiment public, but forgetting to enjoin the Cassedys to silence, the news soon spread like wildfire that Father Jo, no less, was himself going to sleep in Gramma McCrea's bed.

Many were the speculations upon the outcome of the priest's experiment, many would have been the comments if that little community could have witnessed the strange goings on in the grand bedroom, after the Cassedys had bade their reverend guest good night, and gone to their own untroubled repose. In the first place, Father Joseph produced several sacred emblems and instruments of his high office, and betook himself to devotions of so exceptionally lengthy a character that the clock was on the stroke of twelve when he had concluded. Even then he showed no evidence of an intention to undress, but arrayed himself rather in the robes of his calling, and with candle and book proceeded, according to long disused formulas, to determine whether the picture upon the bed-head could by any possible chance derive its extraordinary power from the spirit of darkness and evil.

A weird, yet impressive spectacle, the priest afforded, in that midnight solitude, performing sacred rites by the light of a solitary candle, with the purpose of guarding his parish against the presence of a possible necromantic influence.

Father Joseph was not a particularly superstitious man, but he was a highly imaginative, and exceedingly conscientious one, and his performance in the Cassedys' house that night was the antithesis of things frivolous or vain. At length, thoroughly satisfied that whatever the picture might be, it certainly was not the result of satanic inspiration, the conscientious priest laid off his clothes and pillowed his head beneath "Itself," where, weary with his long vigil, he soon dropped into a delicious sleep. He did not waken till Mrs. Cassedy, alarmed at his long silence, knocked timidly at the bedroom door. Cheerfully he answered her and

sprang from the bed, conscious of a new vigor. Before he had finished dressing, he became aware of a great change in himself. The nervous affection that had afflicted him for twenty years had entirely left him. He descended to the family living room in a state of amazement. The Cassedys gathered about him with ejaculations of wonder and expressions of joy, and before long half the parish had congregated at the teamster's door, to learn the new miracle that "Itself" had wrought.

For days following this event nothing else was talked of on Fiddler's Point. The ordinary affairs of life seemed of meagre importance compared with the astounding certainty that a series of supernatural works were being performed in that very neighborhood where so lately men had stood aghast and women had bemoaned the loss of property and the destruction of the fruits of lifelong labor.

Such congregations as Father Joseph welcomed at the little church of St. Ann, such reformations on the part of hardened backsliders, such conversions of recalcitrant heretics, such piety among the women of his flock, and such liberal donations to the various funds of the church, had never before been known in that poor parish.

As the rumors of the marvelous cures spread, and in spreading no doubt were magnified, other cripples, from other parishes, began to visit the poverty-stricken and long despised Point, and beg for admission to the potent presence of "Itself." From up and down the river they came, thicker and faster, till the Cassedys were at their wits' end to receive them, and at the same time conduct the domestic affairs of their home. Their privacy was a thing of the past, to be looked back upon with regret and longing. No more could Mike, returning from his day's work, stretch his coatless arms, and extend his shoeless stockings in the comfort of his own house. The children were arrayed from morning to night in their best dresses and their best manners, which, after the novelty had worn off, became highly irksome. Gramma McCrea, poor woman, had no more comfort in her grand room and wonderful bed, seeing that by day the premises were invaded by curious or anxious pilgrims, and by night generally occupied by one or more of the lame, the halt, or the blind.

At first, when those in direful plight petitioned for a chance to occupy the great bed, the hearts of Mrs. Cassedy and Gramma McCrea melted, and the strangers were made freely welcome, without charge, to the benefit they might derive from the curative influence of "Itself" ; but after a time, acting under the advice of Father Joseph, they made a slight charge for the privilege. The honest Priest, full of pious joy at the development of such a marvel in his parish, notified his Bishop, and the latter came straightway to add the seal of his approval to a matter which promised to redound to the fame of his diocese.

When the great man entered the honored dwelling of the Cassedys, the little girls were awed into a becoming silence, and the women adorned themselves as for a great festival, and attended him with tremulous devotion, while even Mike was constrained to remain at home, to surrender the freedom of his muscular frame to the thralldom of Sunday broadcloth, and submit his bronzed neck to the irksome bondage of a starched collar. The Bishop questioned and was satisfied. Moreover, he was pleased to pronounce the episcopal benediction, and when he departed, left behind him an odor of sanctity, and the endorsement of his authority. After that the very door-yard of the Cassedys was not sufficient to contain the throng that gathered there daily, and the now prominent family longed secretly but fervently for a return to their former obscurity and the delightful peace of a quiet way of life.

When the Jefferson City *Palladium* got hold of the news, which it finally did, a young and enterprising reporter was detailed to take care of the item. He visited Fiddler's Point, with a determination to make a good story out of what he believed would prove a very small sensation. The reality so far exceeded his anticipations that upon his return to the office he wrote an enthusiastic account of his discoveries, embellished with numerous clever touches of an original character, and further adorned with a display head by which the wayfaring man, though a deafmute, could not fail to be stunned. In letters that would have lent distinction to a bill-board, men were invited to learn that a new Lourdes had been discovered, an American shrine that bade fair to rival the greatest religious healing establishments of the old world. The

curing of Father Burke was the text for half a column, in an article which occupied fully a page and a half of the *Palladium*.

One of the immediate effects of that publication was the fact that it attracted the attention of Doctor Hamilton Wilton, the great nerve specialist, newly returned from his sabbatical year in Europe.

"I'll just take a run down and look into this," he said, thoughtfully. "The phases of communal hysteria are sure to be exhibited beautifully during such an epidemic."

A series of surprises attended Doctor Wilton's visit to Fiddler's Point. In the first place, he recognized in the Cassedys' dwelling a house of his own, built three years before, on the Kansas River, below Topeka. He had made there a sort of hermitage, where he sometimes retired to pursue in solitude those scientific experiments which were his recreation. During the great flood, while he was absent in Europe, this building had been swept away, and he had imagined that, with its contents, it had been wrecked and carried piecemeal to the Mississippi.

Led by Mrs. Cassidy the Doctor ascended to Gramma McCrea's room, where the old woman sat in tedious state and explained in sentences so often repeated that they sounded like a lesson learned by rote, the marvelous story of the miracles wrought by "Itself." The corners of the room were already beginning to be filled with a collection of canes and crutches, inevitable attachments of a curative shrine. Wilton looked long and curiously at the picture over the bed, then with a compassionate interest at the woman, to whom already so evidently this exhibition had become a wearisome task. He placed his hand thoughtfully on the frame of the bedstead and ran his fingers along the moulding. Once he seemed upon the point of saying something in reply to Gramma McCrea's rehearsal, but at the end only thanked her courteously, and leaving a bank bill in her hand, bowed himself out.

The second surprise was when the Doctor stood at the rectory door, face to face with the Priest. For a while neither could find voice. As Ham and Jo, they had filled the hours of active boyhood with pranks and adventures, never undertaken singly, and had gained a brilliant, if unenviable, local reputation for mischief before they were fairly in their teens. Now the Physician and

the Pastor stood face to face, dumb because old recollections stubbornly combated the formality of mature propriety.

“Jo ! — Jo ! — you old ——” Wilton choked.

“Ham ! You sinner ——” The priest drew him in and closed the door before flinging his arms around him and executing a fandango for which he was, at a later hour, becomingly penitent.

After awhile, when they were seated over a chop and a bottle of Chablis in a quiet room in the tower, Wilton told Father Jo the story of the house.

“Among the experiments that interested me just before my departure for Europe,” he said, “those upon which I entered with the keenest zest were connected with the wonderful properties of the newly discovered mineral, radium. By singular good fortune I secured a very small quantity of this inestimably precious substance and tried to discover a means by which water or some other medium might be made radio-active, with a view to testing the curative powers which scientists, even then, were beginning to claim for radium. The mineral itself, you understand, is not only too enormously expensive, but far too powerful an agent for direct use. Such an employment of it, I believe, would result in ulcers, hideous deformity, insanity, and death. Reduced to an infinitesimal proportion in water, I conceived that the malefic properties of the substance might be made beneficent. Unwilling to trust my secret hopes to popular discussion, and being anxious to apply the result of my labors in the most effectual way, I purchased an old, massive bedstead, in the sides of which, having grooved them for the purpose, I inserted phials of fluid specially prepared, practically surrounding the occupant of the bed with what I hoped would prove a novel and effectual curative influence.”

Doctor Wilton paused and as he sipped his wine looked earnestly at the Priest, whose face was a study of conflicting emotions. For a moment neither spoke. Then the Physician continued:

“A little picture, that I picked up in a curio shop in Florence, I hung at the bed’s head, for no other reason than that it seemed to me a good place for it. I had no particular motive in putting it there, except a delight in decoration.”

Again he paused. Finally Father Jo asked,

“Have you been to the Cassedys’ ?”

"I recognized the house before I entered," was the reply. "The bed and the picture are both mine."

"Are you telling me the truth, Ham Wilton, or is this one of your pranks?" asked Father Jo. "The story of the picture being a miracle-working relic was hard to believe, God forgive me, but this is harder. Do you know, beyond a doubt, that your science is doing this; is working these cures, I mean?"

"No, but ——"

"Hold on a bit. Do you know that the picture — Itself — is not doing it?"

"No, but ——"

"Easy, easy! You know neither the one thing nor the other. Perhaps 'Itself' is doing more than you think. Anyhow, you may be sure that God Almighty uses strange means to accomplish His purposes. What do you mean to do? Tell these people that their faith is naught, and make them a laughing stock to their neighbors?"

"Not so fast, Jo," answered the Doctor. "Do you mean to say that you will build faith upon a doubt, to use no stronger term. Isn't your religion big enough and broad enough to stand alone, without being bolstered by a — a ——"

"A lie, you mean," broke in Father Jo hotly. Then, after a moment, his face changed. A noble expression chased away the troubled lines that had gathered there, and he rose and took his friend by the hand.

"The truth needs no lie to bolster it," he said. "You have given me a hard task, Hamilton Wilton; and sorely it goes against the grain to tell those good people that they have been fooling themselves. It'll be harder still," he added ruefully, "to tell the Bishop, but it must be done. It must be done."

The Doctor held the hand extended to him in a hearty grip.

"Fix it to suit yourself, Jo. As for me, I'm out of it. If I were to tell those people, they wouldn't believe me, and after all — Who knows?"



The Lace Designers.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.



WHEN, some years ago, a New York lace house placed on exhibition in its windows a number of original designs in lace, they instantly attracted critical attention because of their exquisite novelty and beauty. Indeed, the metropolitan lace designers had never before seen anything that could compare with them.

"These wonderful patterns," wrote one of the critics, "seem almost a reconciliation of geometry and art, the designs partaking of the exquisite and exact forms of crystalization, while at the same time expressing the freedom of artistic fancy."

This may have seemed excessive praise to some, but the designs were indeed wonderfully fine, and their designer was besieged by interested capital and enthusiastic admirers.

He proved to be a young fellow of twenty-four, who, two years before, had been compelled to give up his trade as a lithographer and go to Arizona in hope of recovering his lost health. He smiled lightly at the outspoken praise accorded his work.

"It is nothing," he said. "I owe everything to my wife, who did the lace work after I procured the designs."

He turned to the young Spanish girl seated near, and his pallid face lit up with ardent love. The beautiful young creature returned the look. Then her eyes fell and she blushed. Unconversant with the language spoken, she yet divined that she was the subject of praise.

"If it hadn't been for my wife," continued the young fellow, "I probably would have thrown these designs away. In fact, I would never have taken up the matter seriously; but since she has worked out my patterns in thread, I see that they are a great thing, and I've already laid my plans. I propose to control the

* Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

world's lace designs by creating the most original and beautiful patterns, and my resources in that line are, I believe, practically unlimited. But don't give me credit for being an artist. Fact is, I'm not one at all, and I don't wish to take any golden fleeces of honor by sailing under false colors. I am merely an inventor, or rather, a discoverer, and these designs, while not machine work, are not hand work. I propose, however, to keep their nature a secret, that will be passed on to my heirs, and I think," concluded the speaker, more modestly than lamely, "I have a pretty good outlook in this matter."

The designs on exhibition were withdrawn for fear they might be copied before being patented, and their inventor had just signed a contract with a syndicate of lace manufacturers to furnish designs for the syndicate at fabulous prices, when the fine enterprise was wiped out and the new art lost in a sudden, piteous tragedy.

On returning to his home one afternoon, the young designer found his wife's dead body lying across an inner threshold. At first he thought that the beautiful girl had merely fainted, but when he lifted the face he saw that life was extinct and that Repulsiveness inhabited with Death the once lovely form.

"My God," he sobbed, "I left her this morning so beautiful and happy."

He lifted her to a couch and covered up her face, and going into the street begged a passing pedestrian to come and help him.

When they had taken the body away, and before the police arrived, the young designer hurried up to the attic room of the cottage.

It was a small room, rather scantily furnished. Against the south wall was a large, glass-covered case, while beside it was a cabinet filled with bottles. In the center of the room was a table. Set up on this table were several movable stands, each formed of four slender, braced steel uprights, connected at the top by a fine wire, making a rectangle of about eight by twelve inches. The purpose of these stands seemed to be to offer a light, open framework on which lace designs could be worked out in thread. One stand was in use. An exquisite pattern, worked in filmy silk, hung upon it and trembled like a fairy thing.

But the room, sparsely furnished as it was, was no place for a man, for a tall, narrow bottle, jarred from a shelf above, perhaps by a heavily closed door, had crashed through the glass that covered the case against the south wall, and by way of the broken pane there had escaped hundreds of little poisonous spiders.

They ran and leapt everywhere — across the floor, up the table legs, along the walls and ceiling, against the window panes, and in and out of the half-shut cabinet door, dancing a myriad maze like beams from some scarlet sun.

Seizing a magazine, the young fellow began to kill them. About the room he went, indifferent to the knowledge that their bite would mean death — death such as had come to his once lovely young wife, fearful and immediate.

At last he realized that he, too, had been bitten. He had not sought it, yet he had not cared. What mattered it now, anyway? Still about the room he leapt, striking and stamping, till the poison struck at his heart like an arrow, intense and burning, and even after he had fallen he attempted to smash the scurrying, scarlet bodies.

They found him there a few hours later, as he had found his unhappy young wife in the room below — dead and unnatural. It was pitiful, yet it was more wonderful, for over his dead face Something — could it have been one of those little scarlet spiders, made drunk on a secret fluid? — had spun a gossamer web of novel and exquisite design, such as would have become the lace of a royal bride.



The Death of Kalu's Hand.*

BY CYRIL ETHERIDGE.



THE fierce African sun had set and the short tropical twilight deepened into gloom before the trial was over. At length the chief spoke.

"We have treated the white man as a friend and a brother. He has come and gone amongst us and no man hath said him nay. We have given him of our lands and of our flocks and herds, and he hath betrayed us into the hands of his kind. Brothers, what shall be his doom? Kibaru, do you speak first!"

A gray-bearded man gazed for some moments at the white twitching face before him. "Let him die the death of Kalu's hand," he said at length.

"Aye, aye," exclaimed the others, "Kibaru has it, the death of Kalu's hand."

"So be it," said the chief, "take him to the shrine of rock. So Kalu shall be appeased."

And so through the darkness John Marsden was hurried out of the village towards the river along the faint streak of a forest track just visible in the darkness. Presently the party reached a stockaded enclosure, within which the black outline of the temple was dimly shaped. Long as he had gone to and fro amongst these men, and well as he knew their ways and customs, this was new ground to him. The shrine was sacred and it was death for any but a believer to enter, but the white-faced captive in their midst was already a dead man in their eyes.

The guards and their prisoner ascended the narrow track winding between the giant granite boulders and at length they halted. In front Marsden could see nothing but black darkness yawning before him. One of the men advanced cautiously, and kneeling down groped before him.

* Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

"Inkoos, here is the ladder."

"Descend first, two of you, and then let the white man follow you."

So, with sinking heart and one last look into the black night, Marsden followed down the rough steps, till they stood on the floor of the cavern.

Again Kibaru spoke. "Listen, white man, whom we have treated as a brother. This is the shrine of Kalu, the god of the river. See," he said, pointing upwards, "he is there watching you. Tomorrow's sun will show him to you in his might. Day and night, and night and day, you will watch his hand, until you shall see — what you shall see. You shall live many hours until his wrath is appeased, for though he is very sure, he strikes but slowly. This is Kalu's will and the fate of the traitor. Farewell, white man, whom we shall see no more."

The others followed him in silence as he retraced his steps upwards, and presently Marsden heard the creaking and groaning of the heavy ladder, as it was laboriously pulled up the face of the rocky wall. Then silence fell and he was alone.

For some minutes the man remained where he was, peering anxiously around him. Black clouds obscured the moon and little but darkness was visible. He had heard much of the fiendish and loathsome cruelties of the Nyangwe tribe and he knew that his fate would be terrible, but what? How would Kalu strike?

Underfoot the floor was damp and slippery, and all around were apparently dark and dank walls. A faint drip, drip caught his ear, and poisonous exhalations of stagnant muddy ooze seemed to rise from the ground. Cautiously he left the wall and took a few steps slowly forwards. Suddenly his right foot met nothing but the empty air, and with a jerk he threw himself instinctively backwards just in time. In front of him yawned an open pit, and he crawled, trembling, back to the wall. He drank sparingly of the pitcher of water, replacing it carefully against the side, and lay down. It was no use experimentalizing in Kalu's shrine in the darkness.

Well, it had certainly been a terrible piece of bad luck. For many years he had gone backwards and forwards trading amongst these men, and had prospered. What the chief had said was

quite right; they had treated him well and fairly, and he was free to come and go. Then had come rumors of trouble and war. From the open veldt and rolling prairies of the southwest tanned, hardy, long-limbed men on wiry horses had begun to press forward into the native territory. At length came the day when white and black stood face to face, and the clash of arms could no longer be averted. Marsden considered the situation long and anxiously. He would not raise his hand against the savage, who had treated him so well, by leading against him the white man, who had come to conquer. The simplest way out of the difficulty was to clear out and take no part in the quarrel, so he decided to trek southwards. Unfortunately, as night fell on his second day's march he had ridden into a small mounted party of whites, who had pushed on some few miles ahead of the main body, and he had halted the night with them, but he stoutly refused to act as guide, in spite of their entreaties.

Chief Umbopu's intelligence department was of the very best and he was speedily informed of the raid. Collecting his warriors he fell secretly and speedily on the venturesome little band. Taken completely by surprise and attacked in overwhelming force, but few escaped. The remainder met with the short shrift of the sharp assegai. Only one prisoner was spared — John Marsden. They took care to take him alive.

Appearances were certainly against him, and in vain he protested his innocence. On previous occasions he had always informed the chief of his intended trading journeys to the south. This time, after secretly settling his affairs, he had stolen out like a thief in the night, and was caught red-handed with arms in his hands fighting in the ranks of the white men. It was hardly surprising that his trial was short, sharp and decisive, and his fate — well, he would soon see. At any rate, there was no good losing heart; Kibaru had said he had many hours to live, and the men who had escaped would speedily tell the main body. Perhaps they would get up in time.

After a few hours' disturbed sleep he woke to find daylight struggling in through an open space in the overhanging roof of rock. Beside him on the ledge, in a wicker basket, was a fresh supply of mealie meal and a gourd of water. It was evident he

was not to be starved. He looked round anxiously in the dim light, and this is what he saw:

Around and above him the walls of a natural cavern had been straightened out until the sides were perpendicular, enclosing an irregularly shaped circular pit some fifty feet deep and as many yards across.

The whole of the pit, except a narrow ledge on which he found himself, was occupied by a steep, roughly-paved basin, at the bottom of which, about twenty feet farther below where he stood, was a stagnant pool, green with slime and thick with mud and ooze. It was down these precipitous sides he had narrowly escaped falling the previous night.

In the centre of the pool, on a rough pedestal of rock, stood the effigy of a huge figure, whose horrible face and relentless eyes were turned directly towards him. The grotesque and cruel expression heightened the significance of the pointing right hand, which was directed menacingly at the water immediately in front of him. Marsden gazed in fascinated awe at the forbidding face and anxiously followed the direction of the hand, but nothing was discernible under the foul, muddy surface. But that rigid, baleful stare was more than he could stand, and he walked hastily round the ledge to the other side of the pool.

No, there was apparently no egress anywhere. The sides were straight and above the overhanging rocks nearly met except for an oval-shaped opening on one side. Not even a monkey could have climbed out. Well, he would stay where he was. Kalu's back view was certainly preferable.

As the man brought his eyes down from the roof, he again faced the rigid stare and pointing hand. Good heavens, the figure had turned round and was still facing him. He could hardly believe his eyes. He walked slowly back to his original position, and the face and hand slowly followed him.

Marsden wiped the sweat from his face. "Day and night, and night and day, you will watch his hand, until you shall see — what you shall see." Again he followed the direction of the hand, peering white-faced into the slimy pool. At once he noticed the water had risen, and was slowly and surely rising. What was going to happen?

Of course, he had it! The river was close by. The pool communicated with it by some subterranean source. They were letting in the water, or the river was rising. They were going to drown him slowly, for the water would have to rise over twenty feet.

But no, there was more to it than that. The path round the pool was several feet lower than the foot of the pedestal, on which the figure of Kalu stood. As the water rose he would be compelled to swim to it. The sides were rough and sloping, and he could doubtless clamber up and gain the top, which seemed about six feet square. He would then be standing on the same platform as Kalu, and—immediately under the upraised arm. Ah, the death of Kalu's hand!

For twelve long hours Marsden paced the circular path, watching the rising water. At one point he detected a slight boil on the surface and a few bubbles rising, doubtless just above the entrance of the underground channel through which the pool was slowly being filled. And wherever he went that long summer's day that rigid stare and pointing hand followed him.

As darkness approached he noticed a slimy, battered-looking old log, some twenty feet long. It was evidently a portion of the trunk of a tree. Knotted, gnarled, and worm-eaten, it looked as if it had been in the water for many years. It was so saturated and water logged, that one or two knots only appeared above the level of the surface, the remainder being faintly discernible under the green scum.

Horrible as the darkness was in that loathsome cavern, the man welcomed the coming of the night that shut out the irksome scrutiny of the hideous idol. All night he lay dozing uneasily, listening to the drip from the walls. Once more in his dreams he seemed to hear the noise of the fight when he was taken prisoner. Again he heard the frenzied shouts of the troopers, the sharp crack of the rifles, again the hissing "Sgee," "Sgee," of the savage warrior, as he drove home his short stabbing spear. How vivid it seemed! Several times he awoke with a start, but only the faint drip broke the dead stillness of the cavern. The moonlight, struggling in, revealed the still pointing idol, and between its hand and himself lay the dark shadow of the log.

At gray dawn, as he turned uneasily over, his hand splashed into the water, and in an instant he was on his feet. Good heavens, how quickly it had risen; it was just lapping the edge. His time had come. He would have to swim to the pedestal and face—Kalu's hand.

He packed his meal and water gourd carefully into his coat, making a tight bundle of it with a sleeve as a loop. A few strokes with one hand would carry him across, and he could easily carry the bundle in the other clear of the water.

A few strokes only, and yet he hesitated. How foul and oily the water looked in the faint morning light, and how rank was the stagnant smell. Could a man swim in such stuff? Suppose he got entangled in weeds or sunk in the oozy slime? and he stirred the water dubiously with one foot. Stay, why not make use of the log? There it lay, quite close to him. If he could coax it by drawing the water towards the side he could straddle it and paddle himself across. That would be better than soaking himself in that evil smelling liquid. He sat down on the edge, letting first one leg and then the other gingerly into the water, and, reaching out, commenced drawing the water towards him.

What had happened? The man could hardly say, but suddenly he seemed to have received some tremendous shock, that sent him reeling and splashing over on his back with his legs in the air. White-faced, with choking heart, he scrambled hastily to his feet, staring in helpless terror from Kalu's hideous face to the log at which it was pointing. He could have almost sworn that the hand had signalled sharply, and that the log had darted straight for him. But no, it was impossible; there it lay just as it was before, heavy and water-logged, looking as if it had not moved for a hundred years.

Thoroughly unnerved with the terror of some vague, unknown danger, the nature of which he could not grasp, Marsden, with the sweat pouring down his face, straightened himself up against the wall behind him. The water had now risen half way up to his knees. He hardly noticed the basket with his daily allowance of food and water being lowered carefully down by the figure crouching over the overhanging rock. He was staring before him in growing horror. Why! Now that the growing light was begin-

ning to penetrate, he could make out not only one log, but half a dozen of them, in the water between him and Kalu's hand. Like the spokes of a wheel, they radiated in a semicircle towards him, heavy and inert. What in the name of heaven did it all mean?

Suddenly there was a sharp crack of a rifle above and the basket fell into the water on the ledge. Then the light overhead was blotted out as, with a yell of terror, a black figure, turning over and over, fell into the pool on his left, with a heavy thud, that splashed the water half way up the cliff. Shot after shot rang out, shouts and yells followed up above, but Marsden had no ears for them. He watched in helpless terror the horrible scene before him.

Like a flash the heavy inert logs sprang into life and whipped sharply round towards their prey. Half a dozen huge crocodiles, raising their hideous lengths half out of the water, launched themselves at the struggling, screaming wretch, tearing him limb from limb. Round and round the pool they surged in horrid strife, their great jaws clashing now at their victim and now at each other, churning the muddy waters into crimson foam. In the fierceness of the struggle one reptile was forced bodily on to the ledge. Half blinded by the slimy ooze flung over him, Marsden backed up against the cliff, his fingers stiffening in their frenzied grasp of the rock behind him. With difficulty he kept his footing in the waves surging over the slippery ledge. Gradually the turmoil subsided, but the heaving of the waters and the bubbles rising from below gave grim evidence of the gruesome tragedy being enacted in the black depths.

Marsden suddenly found his voice. The crocodile on the ledge, recovering from his astonishment and scenting an undisputed victim, turned his long, ugly black snout in his direction and commenced waddling, half-swimming and half-walking, towards him. Shout after shout in the frenzy of despair rang out from the cavern. A sunburnt, unshaved face and the muzzle of a rifle were protruded cautiously over the overhanging rock above. A few hastily gasped out words from below, and the contents of the rifle magazine were lodged in the reptile's body. A few minutes later a looped rope was let down, and a dozen willing arms had pulled Marsden out of Kalu's shrine.

When Marsden had fully recovered from his terrible experience he learned from a prisoner, taken in the raid, that the natives had long since noticed that this curious natural cavern was the abode of some of the crocodiles infesting the neighboring river, which communicated with it by an underground channel. Superstition, engendered by its singular formation and weird gloom, soon caused it to be considered sacred, and it was dedicated to the god of the river. The reptiles were worshipped, and their presence encouraged by feeding them.

The artificial straightening of the sides, rendering egress impossible, and the cutting of the ledge, readily adapted the pit for human sacrifice. The effigy on the rock pedestal in the centre, revolved by a simple piece of mechanism by the priests on duty, was introduced later as an afterthought to add to the horrors of the tragedy. The mental torture of the victim, seeing the water gradually rise until the crocodiles were enabled to seize him from off the ledge, or he was obliged to swim to the pedestal in the centre, can readily be imagined. The reptiles were not fed for some days before a human sacrifice.



Dalton's Inspiration.*

BY STELLA B. McDONALD.



AURICE DALTON was discouraged. It seemed to him he had spent all his life painting pictures of rural scenes, in which there were forever the same clump of trees spreading their branches over artistic little streams, the same always-blue sky, and the same familiar cows disporting themselves in the background. "Sweet things," the women called them, while the men shrugged their shoulders and bought them for their wives. And Dalton had always remained indifferent to the shrugs so long as his pictures had a certain demand and brought him fair prices.

But yesterday the demon of discontent had entered his brain. "Hang the luck," thought Dalton to himself, "I ought to have been a girl and painted on velvet with a pen. I'm not sure that I didn't work worsted butterflies when I was a kid." By which it will be seen that Giles Dalton, artist, possessed no exalted opinion of himself or of women's accomplishments.

The change had occurred the night before, at a musicale, when his friend Mott had introduced him to a stunning girl, and she, with a charmingly rude smile, had said, "I hope you are no relative of Dalton, the artist."

Dalton unblushingly disclaimed any kinship with himself, and Miss Forsythe had gone on to say, "That man has honestly made me despise the country as he sees it. Ugh! I loathe his green fields, and his cows haunt my very dreams. It is incomprehensible to me how a man can plod on and on with such characterless, inane daubs as his."

Dalton smiled feebly and said, "Don't you think maybe you are a bit rough on the fellow? Maybe he would have soared higher but found his talent unequal to his aspirations."

*Copyright, 1907, by The Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved.

"No," replied Miss Forsythe, "I was talking to Carl Brooks, an intimate friend of his, and he said this Dalton was perfectly contented and would die painting daisy-studded meadows. Bah ! I can just picture such a man — slender, blond, effeminate, with white hands and a Van Dyke, and of all detestable things, I think a beard is the climax."

Dalton reared his dark head on his broad shoulders and passed his hand over his smooth, square-jawed face with a sense of peculiar satisfaction. Then he asked, "Do you paint, Miss Forsythe ?"

Her eyes danced as she replied, "Only once in a great while, Mr. Dalton, when I am unusually pale. But seriously, there is nothing on earth appeals to me like a splendid canvas. I can sing and play, but am not fond of music ; I write and read, but books bore me. I do not sketch, model or paint, but it is the regret of my life. Nothing moves me like art, and I have inspiration enough for any number of masterpieces, but I cannot execute a thing."

"Why don't you become acquainted with Dalton, the artist, and give him some of your ideas ? He may not have the making of a genius in him, but, anyway, his evolution under your personal supervision would be most interesting."

"Here comes Auntie," interrupted Miss Forsythe, as a stately woman advanced toward them ; "were you looking for me ? Well," she said over her shoulder to Dalton as she turned away, "I have an idea that would place any artist who learns it among the ranks of the old masters and that would build up a new school in art. Come, Auntie."

Dalton noticed her profile as she stood a moment in the crowd. It was not remarkable for beauty or for youth, but there was a sense of dignified purpose in every feature — a certain knowledge of something self-contained that appealed more than mere good looks. She wore a pale yellow gown of some loosely flowing material that reflected its warmth into her ivory skin and pale gold hair. But it was her eyes with which Dalton was most impressed, eyes of a peculiar hazel, with golden glints in them that reached into one's memory and lodged there. Dalton thought of Le Gallienne's "Golden Girl" : he still felt strangely excited

over the conversation when he made his adieus and went for his coat and hat.

As he went down the steps under the awning, he was conscious of a tall, graceful figure in a gorgeous cloth-of-gold cloak beside him for an instant as Miss Forsythe and her aunt moved toward their carriage. Leaning toward her he whispered. "Of course you knew I am Dalton, the artist."

"Yes," she replied, with a direct, golden gaze into his eyes, "and I knew that you knew I knew."

And thus had come Dalton's awakening to something more ambitious, and the dawn of the next day found him sitting in his evening clothes, with the fire long gone out, but with an unwonted fever in his veins that made him insensible to cold or fatigue.

The next morning, blue and discouraged, Dalton went to his studio with lagging steps, which finally halted before an easel bearing the canvas he had left unfinished the day before — "Sunset on the Farm."

Yesterday it had seemed good to him, but now it jarred upon his newly developed taste so roughly that he struck out at it with his fist and demolished a bunch of sheep that were gamboling with incompleated anatomy on a hillside. Around the studio were others of the same style — inane, without character — the kind that are never remembered after the first exclamation of "How pretty!"

Dalton placed one on the fire-dogs in the huge fireplace and watched its painted corners curl up with a feeling of peculiar satisfaction. Picture followed picture until the studio was stripped, and when the last one was gone with a final burst of little sparks that reached out viciously for him, he turned his feet wearily from the studio and went down into the street like an old man tired of life.

At luncheon at the Club, he sat next to his old chum, Carl Brooks. After a little talk, Dalton was wondering how he could lead the conversation to the subject that filled his mind, when Brooks introduced it himself, by saying, "I saw you doing the society act at the Belmonts' last night."

"Yes," replied Dalton, with a carefully careless manner, "I

heard that you had been saying a good word for me behind my back."

Brooks grinned. "Oh, thunder, old man! I did give you a blast, but you know you are confoundedly apathetic in your art, and I hope Miss Forsythe brought it home to you."

"She did that all right. But I'll forgive you if you'll tell me something about her. Who is she?"

"She is the last of the Philip Forsythes, about thirty years old, spends most of her time abroad and can afford the luxury of unlimited letters of credit. She hasn't a rep. as a beauty, but her cleverness and those weird yellow eyes render her interesting, and a certain elusiveness and mystery about her make some people declare her fascinating. That rather grand lady who always accompanies her is her aunt, and I fancy the fair Forina leads her a dance."

"What an absurd name," interposed Dalton, "it's sort of a cross between a breakfast-food and Raphael's lady-love — neither of them very desirable articles. But tell me, she talked to me in a rather unusual way for a first meeting — is eccentricity her pose?"

"Not in the least," replied Brooks, "her father was a decidedly queer duck and tried to bear out the Martian theory and similar fairy-tales. In fact some went so far as to say he was not strictly *compos mentis*. The daughter is as genuine as they make 'em, but a bit too progressive for the average mind. Hence, she is dubbed eccentric."

Dalton frowned in a preoccupied manner, and then remarked, "Well, she's decidedly interesting, and she's played havoc in my studio."

"How do you mean?"

"Simply that I've destroyed every canvas in it."

"For Heaven's sake! Aren't you going to paint any more?"

"I don't know what I'm going to do. I know that I never want to go into the country again — I'd be ashamed to look a cow in the face." He slouched up out of his chair, reached for his hat, and added, "You don't happen to know where she's stopping, do you?"

"No," replied Brooks, "but I can find out and let you know,

for my mother and her aunt are warm friends. Shall I find you at the studio ?”

“Yes. Many thanks. Ta-ta, old man,” and Dalton’s broad back vanished through the door.

Dalton returned to his studio in a listless, disinterested way, and a pang of self-pity swept over him as he beheld the bare walls, and skeleton-like easels. First pulling a cord that let fall a soft yellow drapery over the sky-light, thus flooding the room with a mellowness that veiled somewhat its desolation, he lighted his meerschaum, and sat ruminating over his life until it seemed to him his future stretched out in a waste too dreary to be contemplated. He was a failure, and he had not even recognized the fact until the frank scorn of a woman had opened his eyes. Now, what was left to him ? If he were starving to death, he could never produce anything rural again, and he had absolutely no talent for painting any other subject. How long he had sat there he did not know—he was conscious only that the Sleepy Hollow chair was alluringly adaptable to the curves of one’s body, and the mellow light most restful to one’s tired brain.

Suddenly before his eyes appeared a thin, vapory mist, which rapidly grew in density until he seemed to be enveloped in a yellowish fog, except that instead of being chill and depressing, it gave out a subtle warmth that vaguely exhilarated him. He sat up in his chair, tossing his head to shake off any possible trick of the imagination, but in every direction his gaze met the peculiar yellow haze. He sank back again, trying to calm his bewitched mind, then sprang up quickly and stood trembling, facing one corner of the room. There the fog had dissolved so as to leave clear a picture, the composition of which burned into Dalton’s brain as a branding-iron marks the flesh of a steer. A woman stood on his model-platform—Forina Forsythe, clad in a gold gown of some exquisite fabric that fell in shimmering folds around her lithe body. In her hands she held a crystal, into which she was gazing with such horror as could only be the expression of utmost fear, and as Dalton looked closer, he also saw, in the glass ball, the scene that caused such terror in her eyes. In miniature what appeared like a piece of stone was shown, across which was lying a woman’s arm in the relaxation of death. The

rest of the woman's body was lost in the reflection of the glass, but Dalton could easily detect upon the arm the same antique scarab bracelet that he had noticed on Miss Forsythe's. One other detail added to the grewsomeness of the whole—a fat loathesome worm was undulating slowly but steadily toward the woman's upturned palm.

Dalton shuddered and recalled with repulsion that he was one of the most enthusiastic followers of the new fad of crystal-gazing. How horrible it all was, and how the woman was suffering! If only he could catch an expression like that on canvas it would be a masterpiece! Still, ought not he to destroy the illusion and end such agony even though it be imaginary?

He started toward the platform, when, almost as though Forina spoke to him, a voice seemed to say, "Paint! Paint! Work!"

Dalton threw back his shoulders, laughed aloud and dashed through the fog to the opposite corner where he kept fresh canvases. Selecting the largest, snatching up charcoal, and dragging an easel, he made his way back to the point from which every detail of the picture was clear to him. Then throwing himself into a chair he began to sketch with an unwonted boldness.

The seconds rushed into minutes, and the minutes into hours, and Dalton replaced charcoal with paint and worked with feverish concentration. He was dimly conscious that some one rapped on the studio door and then departed, and somewhere in the mist-filled room a telephone rang several times. But Dalton was beyond being disturbed, and his brushes flew from palette to canvas as though guided by the shade of a Guido. Once he realized that night had descended, but though the room was full of dark, cloudy shadows, the light about the model-platform and easel was as softly strong as summer sunshine. Not once did Forina's slender figure falter from the trying position; not once did her horror-stricken gaze wander from the crystal, and still Dalton painted on, though the heat of fever crept over his brow, his head throbbed, and he felt a faintness that almost conquered him.

Somewhere out of the night a clock struck three, but the silence was unbroken save for the strokes of the brush as it flew over the canvas. Then followed such sounds as mark the progress of day in the city—the rumbling of the milk-carts, the cries of the news-

boys, children's laughter and shouts on their way to school, a street-piano grinding out the complaint that "Everybody works but father." The bells and whistles proclaimed the respite of noon after the morning's labor, and then came the children returning at four, and the whistles again at six announcing that day's work over.

Dalton was painting in the last reflection in the crystal when he felt a peculiar numbness steal over him, the hand holding the brush fell powerless to his side, and the woman on the model-platform seemed melting away. He tried to pull himself together and to put out a detaining hand, but it was no use ; he felt much the same sensation he had once experienced while taking chloroform — the struggle to remain cognizant of surroundings and the gradual slipping away into unreal space.

Several hours later they broke in the door and found him lying there, unconscious, before a canvas which startled them into awe and admiration as they gazed. Could this be the work of Dalton, the gay, self-satisfied dilettante? And if he had produced this work of art, who had been his model? What miracle had taken place?

The next day the doctor's fussy little back had scarcely disappeared, when Dalton pulled himself weakly out of bed and into bath-robe and slippers, and climbed the stairs to his studio. At the door he paused, hesitating to destroy what he knew must have been a chimera of his tired brain when he had sat down with his meerschaum in the Sleepy Hollow chair. Then he went inside, closed the door after him and walked straight to the spot where he recalled that his canvas had been placed. Again he paused and brushed his hand in bewilderment over his eyes, scarcely able to grasp the miracle of the painting before him — such beauty of coloring, such dignity, such intelligent understanding of his subject he saw in the work. Even as he wondered he gave a shout of exultation as he realized that ambition and inspiration had claimed him, and that he was young and full of strength and energy to carry out his new ideals. He had felt that there was more than an ordinary interest attached to his meeting with Miss Forsythe ; he must see her and tell her what this marvellous dream of her had accomplished for him.

He went hurriedly to the telephone and called up Brooks, who had promised to obtain her address for him.

Mr. Brooks was not there, so the maid answered. He and his mother had gone to Mrs. Forsythe's to see if they could be of any assistance.

"Assistance?" asked Dalton.

"Yes, Mr. Dalton; did you not see it in the papers?"

"Papers?" he repeated stupidly.

"Yes, sir; they are full of it."

"Full of *what*?"

"Miss Forsythe, sir. She was gone all day yesterday and the night before, and last night the police found her right near your studio, and she was dead, sir. The doctors say she must have fainted and struck her head on the stone curbing as she fell, for there is a terrible gash in her left temple. Anyway, she's dead, Mr. Dalton, and they say Mrs. Forsythe is almost crazy. Yes, sir, what did you say, sir? Mr. Dalton?—Well, he's polite to ring off like that."

Dalton dropped the receiver and stumbled over to a chair into which he literally fell, trying to grasp what he had heard. His gaze fixed on the glorious canvas from which the golden girl stood out mysteriously, and then wandered to the bare model-platform, and the empty years stretched out wearily before him as he pondered the never-solved problem—the miracle of his inspiration.



Number One.*

BY WARREN EARLE.



It will doubtless be remembered by those who are interested in that sort of thing that during the year 1900 the Phipson magazine published a number of articles descriptive of various places and institutions in and about the Central American countries. These articles were varied in character and extent. Geographically, they ran from Northern Mexico to Panama, and for subject matter they discussed questions as widely divergent as ancient methods of mining silver and modern methods of conducting universities.

I am free to confess that when I received my assignment to this task, in the fall of 1899, it was with no great degree of pleasure that I anticipated a prolonged absence from New York. Yet when, in October of 1900, I found myself waiting in Guatemala City for the wire which would send me home, it was with a keen sense of regret that I contemplated my return. The last of the articles had been completed, the last story, one of Guatemala and its University, had been submitted. There was nothing more to be done, and so I loafed and waited in the beautiful city among the hills. In due time the message arrived, and because I had become fascinated by the country, its rich tones, its delicate climate, its strange people, it was with something akin to a feeling of reprieve that I read:

“Go to Chichen, Yucatan, and write up the ruins.”

The details of my packing and my trip to the coast have nothing to do with this narrative, and no more has my journey from Puerto Barrios to Tanamo. It was a calm journey in a calm country and on a calm sea. The valley of the Motagua and the coast of Belize I described at length in my articles for Phipson's and I shall refrain from further detail here. It is sufficient to say

*Copyright, 1907, by the Shortstory Publishing Company. Copyright secured in Great Britain. All rights reserved

that on the 13th day of November, 1900, the shore boat of the *Santa Maria* drew up beside the slimy green steps of a rickety wharf and I stepped into Yucatan. My bag was unceremoniously dumped beside me, and without more ado the small boat shoved off. The steps were broken and tilted. I ascended gingerly, half expecting to be precipitated into the water. Three steps at the top were entirely gone. I climbed as far as I could, tossed my bag to the dilapidated flooring, and was preparing to scramble up one of the side pieces when I heard someone say, "Give us your hand, Stranger." I did as directed, and was incontinently yanked on to the wharf.

I was expecting to meet and see many strange things in Yucatan, but when I straightened and found myself confronted by six feet of what was unmistakably Western American, from the Stetson to the boots, it occurred to me that the odd and unusual was becoming very strikingly apparent. I was suddenly aware that this familiar figure in this strange setting was probably as queer a thing as I would encounter in all this country.

"He looks too blamed natural," I thought, and might have added, "And acts so," for the big man extended the voluminous hand again, flashed a smile from beneath his long moustache, and drawled:

"Howdy, Stranger, where you from?"

I took the hand and shook it vigorously.

"From down the coast," said I, "Where you from?"

The other released his grip and jerked his thumb over his shoulder.

"From up the coast," he replied.

I feared I had made an unpropitious beginning of our friendship, but if he saw, he quickly forgave, for in terse Rocky Mountain phrase he assured me that I was welcome and my coming fortuitous. In a very few moments he put me at my ease and before the steamer had cleared the harbor on her way to the open we were on terms of companionship.

"Which same being the only conveyance in these parts," he volunteered, referring to the steamer, "it don't make no never mind whether we came from above or below, one thing being sure a plenty, which being that here we are pretty damn liable to stay."

"For the time being," said I.

"And most times thereafter," he added.

With wide and generous sweeps of the hand he called my attention to the things he considered noteworthy, while I, on my own account, noted the green bearded piles of the wharf, the white sand bottom shiftingly visible twenty feet below the surface, the headlands to north and south of the little bay, the sleeping green forests and greener mangrove swamps, and the dry, interlacing roots between the water and the high water line. The steamer disappeared behind the northern point. The churning throb of the screw came faintly to us across the still waters. A long streamer of smoke slowly drifted seaward, and the transplanted one finished his dissertation with the words:

"If sighing was in my line, I'd heave a few bars right now for exercise." Then turning to me and looking keenly from searching blue eyes, he added:

"Stranger, seeing as how I am the only known white in these areas, you and I are pretty liable to foregather considerable. What might it be your desire to be called?"

"I should prefer that you call me Jim," I answered, "though my name is James Alfred Parker Packard."

He pulled his moustache thoughtfully.

"And I should prefer that you call me Bill," said he, "though my name is not Biloxi Billington Billson, as happened to a friend of mine once in Texas. As to the grub pile," he went on, as though in answer to my unspoken thought, "You'll find we are largely reduced to nature. The larder of this yere camp contains beans, beans, beans and more beans, also bananas, limes, guavas and other fruits of the forest, also a native sort of Bull Durham not unpleasing to the soul, when the soul has become properly qualified."

So saying he picked up my bag and started shoreward, exactly as though I had come on invitation and been met by appointment. The town before us consisted of a few broken-down thatched houses lazily sleeping in the sunshine. I noticed that with the exception of a few small boys who contemplated us with shyly curious eyes there were no signs of life. I commented on the fact to my guide, and he sniffed scornfully.

"Where are all the folks?" said he. "Oh, they're all sleeping a heap just about now. It takes more than the arrival of the third stranger to visit these parts in two hundred years to make this yere outfit lose its siesta, you can bet. They'll crawl out 'long about sundown, and pull a plantain or two before they turn in for the night."

It was evident that the populace did not conform to the ideals of his strenuous soul, but the town slept peacefully on, unmindful of his scorn. At the farther side of the place we came to a large stone house, surrounded by a hedge of Spanish bayonet, and so situated as to overlook the village and harbor. Into this house Bill led me, and in the big, cool living-room thereof he made me welcome. After short drinks, I was conducted to a back room and informed that it was mine as long as I cared to stay. I recognized this for luxury, and said as much.

Clean linen made for a new life, and I returned to the front room in the hope, but not the expectation, of a good dinner. Bill was busy with a can opener. My eyes spread with amazement.

"Canned salmon in a stone palace?" I exclaimed.

"Concerning which same I will orate as we feed," said Bill.

That dinner began with turtle soup and ended with coffee. I had obtained Havanas on the boat, so the native Bull Durham wasn't requisitioned.

"As to the palace," said my host, "there is a big boss man who owns all the adjacent earth hereabouts. He has a little boss man who scratches gravel for him and has to live right here in this metropolis. The big boss man did once, but he don't have to no more, so he don't, you bet. The old man left it all one bright day, and told these yere agriculturists to keep out, and you can wager they do a heap. Now, as to the ly _____ es: You remembered I said you was Number 3. Well, I'm Number 2. Number 1 was amongst them present, but has vamoosed. He was a man of refined tastes and much sense. He found a palace empty, and he recognized the fact immejiate that the same had sure been designed for him by an all-wise Providence. He fetched up his salmon and peas, hammocks and trunks, and sent out his at home cards to the natives. After which, he bought one large mule, and sailed away into the interior. I am administrator, with the cans

annexed. Simple, you see, simple as jerking steers." He took a long pull at his cigar. "The big boss man's name is De Hognes. He is a friend of yours — and mine — and number 1 — and all other white men who strike these outskirts."

The smoke flattened and drew out through the window. Bill turned his searching eyes on me, and I could see that he was waiting for me to explain. So I told him the object of my visit, and what I had done and what I wanted to do in Yucatan. Of course, I was intensely desirous of knowing his own reasons for being in Tanamo, but it was matter to be volunteered, not requested, and the only clue I ever obtained, either to his name or condition was this, and I write it here that any who chance to read may have as much information as myself. I ended my explanation thus:

"So I am here because of certain people in New York, and the sooner they hear from me the better they will be pleased."

To which he replied, "And I am here because of certain people in Colorado, and the sooner they hear from me the less I will be pleased."

My errand and my proposed trip to Chichen Itza were much to his liking, and the invitation to accompany me which I extended was accepted at once. I considered this turn of affairs extremely lucky. The country was wild, and, as he hinted, more or less dangerous. He was a frontiersman, ready, alert, quick and resourceful, — the very man I should have chosen. The next day was spent by him in securing horses, saddles and other equipment, while I loafed around town.

The natives were a careless, shiftless mixture of Spanish and Indian, who worked as little as possible, and looked upon the absent De Hognes as something and not someone. They tilled his fields, and made his money for him, and were content. To satisfy a natural curiosity I made inquiries concerning Number 1, and from their descriptions I concluded that he was a prospector, either American or English. From the amount of his luggage I fancied him English, but the natives said he chewed tobacco, and that gave color to his American citizenship. As to his fate they were as calmly enigmatical as a summer sea. About six months ago he had come and gone. He had not been seen since. Did they think him dead?

"Ah, Señor, undoubtedly."

"How, robbers, thieves?"

"No, no, certainly no."

"What then, snakes, jaguars?"

"Possibly," with an incredulous shrug.

"What then, if none of these things?"

"Ah, quien sabe — who knows?" and knowledge-denying, outstretched hands.

"And do men disappear in this country without explanation?"

The witness crossed himself quickly, and replied,

"Ah, Señor, no — yes — sometimes."

In the course of the day I met the "little boss man," and found him an intelligent fellow of some learning. During the conversation I mentioned my object in visiting his town, and he said,

"You are going to the ruins?"

"Yes."

"The ones at Chichen?"

The form of the question attracted my attention.

"Are there others?" I asked quickly.

He hesitated, and then he, too, crossed himself hastily.

Before he could formulate a lie, I added,

"If so, where are they?"

He paused, but finally said,

"I do not know. No one knows. It is said that a lost temple exists back of Chichen in the mountains. It may be — for myself — I doubt. Perhaps the people at Chichen can tell you."

That was all the information I could obtain. For himself, he doubted, and all the time we talked I noticed that he made the witches' cross with his left hand.

I told Bill of these experiences when we ate that evening, and asked if he knew anything of these other ruins.

"Wall," said he, "You know these yere Greaser people are a heap superstitious. One of their ancestors ain't more'n begun to live when they bury him. He's just commencing to get busy. Why, one of these fellers will worry an' abuse his pore ol' gran'-father till the ol' man crosses the divide for self-protection, en' then that there undutiful but husky son will see the harmless ol'

man's harmless ol' ghost a-sittin' back in the corner some night, an' he'll get so skeered he'll go to work. It sure do surpass my comprehension. Now, for this new outfit of ruins you've caught the wind of, I've heard a heap about them—in whispers. It's a sort of lost temple, as the native man told you, an' it's presumed to be guarded by the ghosts of the remnants of the ol' Apaches who used to hunt hereabouts. No one knows where it is. No one wants to know. No one has ever seen it, and no one in this municipality intends to see it, if he can help it any. If it's here at all, an' I'm sure doubtful if it is, it's back in the hills beyond Chichen. Are you desirous of investigatin' that same?"

"I think we'll look it up, if you're willing to put in the time," I said.

"Time?" he replied, "Time, time is a matter of the temperate zone. We will investigate. We will probe around copious. We sure will."

"Then you are not afraid of spirits?" I queried laughingly.

"Not tremenjious," he answered, "though as a young man I seen and heerd things which were sure uncanny some. I was a-sittin' quiet one night by my fire when a coyote crawled up close to my coat tail, more or less, and yelped. I was new to their ways in them days, and I reckon I elevated myself some ten feet immejiate, and I wa'nt more than half way to the ground on my return trip when a big buck Injun come out of the air on the other side of the fire, an' says 'How.' I was sure agitated a few, but the coyote run, an' the Injun begged a chew of tobacco. They wasn't ghosts by a whole lot."

We sat and talked that night for two or three hours, while the stars came out and blazed in the heavens, and the cucujos gleamed and flashed in the shrubbery. We shook hands again as we parted for the night, and I thanked my luck anew for the fortune which had given me the adventurer for companion.

The next day we mounted our horses and started up the trail for Chichen. Again I shall ask the reader who desires information to peruse Phipson. I saw the ruins there and studied them carefully. Their architecture, to my mind showed unmistakable signs of kinship with the early Egyptian works, and my observations and reasons I set out at length in the article which I

afterward prepared for publication. The triple row of low pillars puzzled me, as they have puzzled others, but the week I spent in the ancient city served to inspire me with a whole-hearted desire to see more of this ancient race. The civilization which they must have possessed piqued my curiosity, and before I had finished my work there I had resolved to follow all clues which might lead to a better understanding of a people which lived so fully and so well even in the dawn of time.

While I was occupied with the ruins Bill scoured the country for information of the lost temple. He dutifully reported progress each evening, but though he unearthed many rumors and traditions, it was not until the end of the week that he obtained any real satisfaction. A man by the name of Pedro said he knew where the temple was, and after being paid liberally he promised to guide us in.

We left on the evening of November 25th. The guide declared we could make it in two days and a half easily. I reserved a doubt as to his competency and accuracy, and I confessed fears as to his constancy, but as long as he led on I could say nothing.

The morning after we left Chichen we found ourselves among foothills. The country was somewhat open, and away in the distance the mountains loomed up grandly. That afternoon we reached the edge of a forest and took to the dry bed of a stream. This we followed between living walls of foliage which towered up and arched above us. The trees stood thick and were all hung with trailing vines. In some cases six or seven trunks, each as large as a man's body, would ascend to a height of twenty feet and there unite to make one great bole reaching up into a labyrinth of branches and leaves.

The forest was silent with the deadly silence of a sick room. The sunlight filtered through in blotches and streaks. The course ahead looked cavernous. One could see neither to the right nor left, nor yet far ahead or behind. The rattle of the dry stones beneath the feet of the horses sounded hollow to the ear. I never before fully realized the meaning of the phrase "cathedral silence" as applied to an aspect of nature.

We travelled the watercourse until late afternoon and then, upon command of the guide, we halted, unsaddled and made

camp on a grassy point at a bend in the river. We ate supper and turned in early. I slept soundly. In the morning, I saddled the horses and we had breakfast. We were about to take up our line of march when the guide, with an apology, commenced to explain to us in detail the route we were to follow.

"Now never mind all that," said Bill, interrupting him, "We will take note as we go. For the present you just move ahead and we'll trail along."

But it then developed that Pedro had a sick mother who was old and feeble and who was dying when he left, and who was probably even now within a few hours of her end, and it was not well that her only son should be away from her when she died.

"A hold-up," was Bill's comment, and he pulled out a bag and took some gold pieces from it. Aside from a flitting gleam of interest in the eyes, there was no effect. Instead of taking the coins the guide leaned against his horse and shook his head. I noticed that he looked sallow, and now and then stretched his neck as though to loosen his neck-band. Bill's keen eye took in the situation.

"Lost his nerve," he observed, "now, I wonder why for?"

He cursed a little in Spanish, but the man was obdurate. In the half light of the morning with the mists about us, we three with the horses stood grouped on the little point, dully glaring at each other. A parrot screamed from the trees. At last, after looking from one to the other, the man said, huskily:

"Feel the horses."

Now, when I had saddled them, I had noticed that they had been sweating, but I had not thought it worth while to say anything. I remembered, too, that when we woke they were all standing in close to us as we slept. Bill felt of the horses and I saw his eye run the banks of the river, but he only said:

"Well, what of it?"

The guide fairly glared at him.

"What of it? What of it?" he said in a half whisper, "Did you sleep last night?"

"Like a brick," said Bill.

"And you?" to me.

"The same," I answered, "Why, didn't you?"

"No," he said, "No. I did not. I could not. I—I—" he paused, and then added, "I could not."

"Well, why not?" said Bill, "out with it. Why not?"

"Because," was the answer, "we were not alone last night. I heard footsteps and I saw shadows on the river bed in the moonlight."

"I fear our guide has the national complaint," said Bill. "That's enough for this time. Just you climb aboard your cayuse here and trot along."

"Ah—you do not believe! You think I lie? Come!"

He clutched Bill's sleeve and dragged him to the river. I followed and we crossed to the farther shore. It was a low bank, mossy and covered with tall grasses and ferns. The native parted these grasses, and peered into the undergrowth. We craned our necks, but could see nothing unusual. The man turned very white, and quickly ran to four other places along the bank at equal intervals around the bend. At each, he stopped and peered into the grass. When we reached him he was shaking with nervousness and muttering, "I saw them, I saw them. Five—five."

We crossed to the point again and here, when Pedro turned to talk to us, he looked squarely into the muzzle of Bill's gun.

"We intend to see them ruins, an' you are going with us," he said, calmly. "Now, mount and lead on, an' if you get lost or don't keep movin' you'll beat your pore ole mother to the happy hunting grounds easy."

Under this inducement, we took up our usual line of march, the guide ahead, Bill next, myself in the rear. Hour after hour we followed up the river-bed, while the mists rose through the trees, and gave way to the sharp-shadowed sunlight of the forenoon. Birds of lively plumage flitted here and there in the gloom of the forest, and once a flock of pigeons passed over head. We could hear the land crabs as they scuttled away into the bushes, and occasionally we would be startled by the sudden squawk of a parrot or the dry scraping of a snake as he slid from our path. Gradually the gravel slope gave way to stony terraces, places where, in the rainy season, the water would play and shoot in flashing waterfalls and cascades.

About noon the heavy forests began to thin out, and a little later, after passing into a country where the trees stood in groves the guide suddenly turned to the southerly bank and struck off upon an almost obscure trail. It was slow travelling through the woods, but little by little the sparse tree growth was replaced with cacti, and at about three in the afternoon we crossed a divide and came out upon a side hill overlooking a wide valley, which stretched in easy, rolling fashion for miles and miles. A yellow haze lay over the whole silent scene. The clumps of royal palms standing here and there seemed to sway indistinctly in the shaking heat. The grass over the entire country was like a finely woven, shimmering rug.

In the center of the valley, a few miles from us, there ran from west to east a placid river. Where it went to down in the east we could not see, but the place from whence it came was very apparent. Like a massive barricade, there stretched across this valley from north to south a great mountain, and the face toward us was a sheer cliff, which, although more than a mile from us looked as high as the walls of the Grand Cañon. From the center of this rampart, and from a great gap which appeared as though made by the mighty slash of some great broadsword, ran the river, like blood from a new-cut wound.

The whole view was like a scene painted on canvas. We descended into it. It was not a steep descent, and at all times we had the landscape in sight. As we went, we became aware that the atmosphere had deceived us, for we seemed to make no progress. We plodded steadily on, and always toward the gap in the cliff whence flowed the river, but it was like walking in a dream. As far as effect went, we might as well have placed our feet in the prints from which we raised them. Yellow, yellow and hazy, everything appeared immobile and unapproachable. The silence shook our nerves. There were no snakes, no mice, not even land crabs. It was like a valley of living death, nothing but a placid river, a black wall and yellow distance.

We travelled all the afternoon and apparently with no results, and then suddenly, as is the way in the tropics, the sun dropped out of sight. The change was immediate. In a twinkling, the yellow, hazy distance was eliminated. Silently and swiftly the

landscape seemed to rush in upon us. Ten minutes after sunset we were in the river at the entrance to the gorge. We regarded each other with sidelong glances. The impenetrable landscape had been exasperating. The enveloping landscape was startling.

We crossed the stream to the northern bank, and, still following the trail, turned westward to the gorge. And here the guide balked again. Thus far had he gone, but no farther would he advance. Here he would wait while the Señors went on. The lost temple was but a few hours' ride, two at the most, and the trail was plain. He would explain but he would not guide. Bill coaxed and threatened. The man shook, but he looked into the round eye of Bill's 48, and would not stir. We considered waiting till day, but concluded that such a course would result in nothing but delay, so, at last, we told him to make camp for himself and wait for us twenty-four hours.

It was already dark when we started up the gorge. The short tropical twilight had given way to the tropical night. There was a great full moon, but it was low in the east, and the shadow of the cañon was darker by contrast. The rest of the world and all the valley became bathed in moonlight. Trees and rocks long distances away stood out sharp and distinct, and looking upon them it was difficult to believe it the same scene which had tantalized us all the afternoon.

Bill led as we struck into the gorge. For perhaps three hundred yards the path led gradually up the side of the cliff, and trended to the southwest. Reaching this point we rounded a sharp bend and found ourselves looking down a great cleft. At the bottom the river slid along black and snaky. On either side the walls rose, toppling inward, to a height of a hundred feet or more. At the farther end, a distance of nearly a mile, the two walls seemed to almost meet above.

Our path ran along the southern cliff like a shelf. It was wide and ample and there was very little underbrush. We stopped for a moment and peered down this tunnel, and I am bound to say that it appeared uninviting. Presently Bill touched his horse, and seeing him do so, I spurred mine. Instead of responding they both commenced to tremble violently, so that it was necessary to soothe and pet them. The peculiar silence of the valley

was accentuated here. It was a different kind of zero, as our old Professor used to say. Without apparent cause, and while I was still engaged in handling my horse, it suddenly occurred to me that the declivity of the river bed from end to end of that gorge must be very great, yet the water flowed below us smooth as velvet, without a ripple, like thick oil in a groove.

Step by step we urged the beasts forward. They went unwillingly, and with fear in every quaking muscle. We had gone a short distance when I thought I heard a movement on the cliff above us. I strained my ears to hear, but I was not certain. The sound came dully, but such as it was it sounded like a deadened pad-pad of footsteps on moss. I waited to hear a twig break, but none broke. So faint was the sound that I was uncertain whether I actually heard, or whether it was one of those sensations born in the ear itself, and which so often deceive when one is alone in the silent places. A moment later Bill glanced up at the cliff, and I knew that he too had heard. As we went, the sounds kept pace above and beside us.

At a signal we both stopped. There was no noise. We started and the pad-pad-pad-pad took up its march. I caught myself saying, "a dog or a jackal runs 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, 1-2, a snake scrapes, a cat creeps one-one-one slowly, a jaguar does the same. This thing marches." Noticing that I had lagged some fifty feet behind my companion, I spurred my horse. He promptly stopped in his tracks, and a great boulder struck the path ahead of me and bounded into the river.

"Cheerful place," said Bill as I joined him.

Ignoring the faint sounds which came to us, we moved on, and had traversed half the length of the ravine, perhaps, when Bill halted and pointed ahead to the cliffs on the north wall at the end. From where we stood the rocks at which we were looking took on in the moonlight which shone upon them the semblance of a great face. The likeness was so strikingly human that we were both amazed. It was a strong, full Caucasian face, and perfect in its outlines. About the mouth there was a certain grimness, and the eyes were lost beneath beetling brows, but there was no resemblance to an ancient idol, no grotesque feature, and yet I felt that it was a work of nature, not of man.

Fifty feet farther on, Bill suddenly threw his horse on to his haunches, and I heard him say "Hell." I hurried up and, though prepared, a cold chill ran over me. In the twinkling of an eye, at exactly the right place, that ancient face changed from death to life. The eyes, which had been sunken in blackness, suddenly blazed with light, and instead of a calm, severe countenance, we were confronted with a leering sneer. The expression was no less than diabolical. I will confess that I was shaken. My mouth was very dry. I was perfectly sure that it was merely moonlight reflected from mica cunningly placed by the ancient people, but from the fulness of my heart I suggested that we go back.

"Go back nothing," was the reply, and we spurred ahead. Farther on the light died from the eyes, and the face became mere stone again.

We made the remainder of that gorge at a lope, but whether we walked or ran, trotted or galloped, the soft footsteps padded along above us. At length we arrived at the end of the ravine and came out into an open moonlit field, across which ran the trail. When we came into the open the footsteps ceased to follow, but we heard them going off to the north in the woods at the side of the clearing. The field was a quarter of a mile or more in width. We forced our horses over it, and, arriving at the farther side, found ourselves on the edge of a broad, level savannah, with grass to our shoulders.

The path or trail was fairly distinct, and we plunged in. Seated upon the horses we could look away across the top of the grass in every direction. To right and left, it spread beyond our range of vision, and ahead it stretched to a large group of palms which we could faintly see in the distance. I was congratulating myself upon the fact that nothing could trail us without being seen, when I became aware that the soft pad-pad had joined us again and that it had been multiplied. I looked upon the high grass to see it sway, but in the perfect stillness, not a blade stirred, except those disturbed by our progress.

And yet, as we went, footsteps were added to footsteps, and cautiously, quickly, cat-like they trod along. Around and beside us, behind and ahead of us we could hear them moving. Though the sounds were never loud, yet it was quite possible to distin-

guish those near at hand from those at a distance, quite possible to separate the steady marchers from those hurrying to keep up.

Something like panic got hold upon us, and striking our spurs deep, we charged our shivering, sweating animals through the heavy growth. But as we ran so ran the followers. Neither faster nor slower did they go, but with a stealthy, feline tread they paced us. I had but one idea, to reach the clump of palms ahead, to gain the open, to rid myself of these sounds which I again assured myself were not sounds at all, but mere figments of my imagination.

After what seemed an hour, we rode out of the grass into a magnificent grove of royal palms, and here we drew rein and breath. I felt that I must be very white as to the face, but I looked on Bill and found excuse. His face was set like iron. The blue eyes gleamed beneath his brows. Coolly he took from its holster first one gun and then the other. Carefully he inspected them, and twirled their cylinders. Then, placing them in their holsters, he remarked:

"I am going to see the end of this trail, if I have to wear cotton in my ears—but that coyote of mine is sure skinned to a finish."

The end was not far to seek. We had no more than passed through the grove than we came out before a wall fully eighty feet high. It stretched away from us to right and left, and in the moonlight every stone was etched. Age had dismantled the top so that what had once been a smooth balustrade was nicked and broken. The large stones which had fallen from place lay sunken in the undergrowth around us. It was the most magnificent specimen of ancient architecture I had ever seen, but the most striking feature of all was the great arched doorway.

The path we were following led straight to and through the wall. Beneath an arch wide enough for three teams to drive abreast, all set about with strange images and capped with an uncouth, stooping figure which seemed about to leap down upon the intruder, the way led into a moonlit interior. We were, without doubt, at the door of the Lost Temple.

As we stirred to go forward I glanced up at the parapet and I saw shadows moving thereon. It occurred to me that, the night,

before, the guide had seen shadows on the river bed. We pushed under the arch and through the musty, foul-smelling tunnel and out on to a stone paving. The moment we came into the open we both stopped to gaze. We were in a massive, square amphitheatre. On either side of us were low, broad stone steps, reaching from the tops of the outer walls down to a center. We had entered by a central way. At either side there was another entrance, and as we looked, through these there came strange shadows which spread out from them and floated and eddied over the broad steps, as leaves float and eddy in a quiet pool. Changing and shifting, they moved here and there. Hurrying and pushing, they seemed to seek their places, while more and more whirled in from those two side openings.

We were standing on a moss-grown stone pavement which stretched before us straight to the center of the amphitheatre, and there, behind and above what looked like an altar with a log lying upon it, there loomed in the moonlight a massive stone figure. A great idol it was, with an ugly, distorted face, sitting stiffly with hands on knees as the Egyptian figures sit, and from its lap there poured a stream of water the size of a man's wrist. Smooth, black and oily, like the water in the river, it fell without splash or gurgle into a carved basin immediately back of and a trifle above the altar.

The black log upon the altar caught Bill's attention, and disregarding the shadows which lined the way, he moved forward. I started to follow, but he motioned for me to stay where I was. Slowly he rode to the altar. It was about stirrup-high. I saw him step off on to the slab, I saw him move to the loglike figure and, stooping, roll it over. He straightened himself with a quick movement, and said, quietly, "Number One," and added, "He died with his guns in his hands."

The shadows swayed and swirled and settled to a tense stillness. Bill quietly removed his hat and then turned to look up at the ancient god, the Jehovah of a race which worshipped before ever man learned to fashion idols out of the black mud of the Nile. The little stream flowed smoothly into the basin. With swinging step Bill crossed to it, placed one foot upon the edge of the cup, bent his head and drank of the waters as they fell.

Hardly had his lips touched them, when he swung round toward me, and as he did so, there flashed into his eyes a look of horrified amazement. His guns fairly sprang from their holsters, and in an instant he was waving them over both sides of the amphitheatre. With a wild shout he jumped for his horse.

"Run—run," he yelled, and his voice seemed to split the silence. The shadows on the steps rolled in a black mass toward the altar. I wheeled and went out at top speed, with the hoofbeats of his horse at my horse's heels. All the tension of the day suddenly let go, and I fled, fled, I felt needlessly, and from I knew not what. I tore through the grove and the grass. I dashed across the open field. I galloped wildly along the shelf-like path in the cañon. In far less time than it took me to go in I came out to the place where Pedro was shivering in his blankets. I had come so rapidly that I had outdistanced Bill. Somewhere in the cañon I had lost him.

I did not tell Pedro what had happened. I did not think it necessary. But I sat down and waited—waited for an hour, two hours, and Bill did not come. Three hours went by, and I decided to go back for him. Mounting again I started up the trail. At a point near the entrance to the gorge where the trail passed close to the river bank, my horse snorted and reared. I dismounted and found on the bank a confused, tangled mass. It was the body of my companion, thrown up there by the river. Tightly clutched in his hands were his guns, and though I had heard no reports I found upon inspection that every shot had been fired.

